

General Information

Glucosamine/Chondroitin Sulfate/MSM combinations are becoming increasingly popular nutritional supplements used to alleviate symptoms associated with osteoarthritis in humans as well as in our pet companions. They are the "building blocks" used by the body to build and repair healthy joints and help to decrease the further destruction of joint cartilage that occurs in aging and injured joints.

Glucosamine and chondroitin, when administered in a pure bioavailable form, have been shown to be safe and efficacious. It is known, however, that not all of our dogs and cats will show a positive response. This is based on age, individual differences and on the initial cause of the arthritis pain. Experience has shown that if no response is seen after the loading period of about 6 weeks, the supplements are unlikely to be beneficial to that particular dog or cat.

One of the associated issues today is that the market is saturated with numerous products that make label claims of containing certain levels of these supplements, but studies have shown that some products do not always deliver that which they claim on their label. Because these products are a "nutritional supplement" they are not strictly regulated by the FDA. Therefore we, as consumers, have limited ways to judge the quality of the products available. These studies have also shown no true correlation to cost - some of the very expensive brands have been shown to have false label claims just the same. Prices widely range from 50 cents to \$4 per daily dose for an average 50 pound dog.

Based on all of the above information, one of the main issues when choosing a product for our pets is the same as when choosing a product for ourselves. Is that product going to contain that which is stated on the label? Since this question has very limited information on which to base an answer, we must have confidence in the brand that we choose. Factoring in cost, convenience, and ease of administration, here are a few choices that we can make for our companion dogs and cats:

- 1) Purchase Schiff brand MOVE FREE or PAIN FREE from Longs or Costco. Use 3 capsules per day for large dogs, 2 capsules for medium dogs, and 1 capsule for small dogs.
- 2) Choose Cosequin (veterinary label chewable tablet), at least initially, to properly evaluate our pets' response, and based on that response then choose to either maintain on cosequin or then try another label once we have established that glucosamine is having a positive effect.
- 3) For cats, since administering a pill every day can be troublesome at best, we can use cosequin powder sprinkled onto the food. Most cats will tolerate the powder on the dry food, or it can be mixed into wet food.

The human products found at health food, grocery, and drug stores are derived from the same sources as for our pets, and can be given to dogs and cats. The daily dose can be given all at one meal or divided into twice daily doses. The capsules are found most commonly in Glucosamine 500mg/Chondroitin 400mg tablets. Many dogs benefit from the formulation with MSM 500mg added as well. The table below is based on this formulation. The dosage for dogs and cats is as follows:

Weight.....	Loading Dose (6 weeks).....	Maintenance
Dogs <25 lbs.....	1 tab daily.....	1/2-1 tab daily
Dogs 25-49 lbs.....	2 tabs daily.....	1 tab daily
Dogs 50-100 lbs.....	3 tabs daily.....	1-2 tabs daily
Dogs >100 lbs.....	4 tabs daily.....	2 tabs daily
Cats.....	1/2 tab daily.....	1/4-1/2 tab daily

There is veterinary product available that we have a very high degree of confidence in the quality and content of the product. The brand Cosequin has been available for years and has completed numerous studies to show the availability and presence of the label claims to be accurate.