

Information about changes to medicines or treatments on the Health Service: **Changes to glucosamine and chondroitin prescribing**

The Health Service is asking doctors to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some treatments on prescription. This is because the treatments are:

- Not as safe as other treatments OR
- Not as good (effective) as other treatments OR
- More expensive than other treatments that do the same thing.

This includes glucosamine and chondroitin supplements.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

What are glucosamine and chondroitin?

Glucosamine and chondroitin are natural substances made by the body and found in the joints. Supplements of glucosamine and chondroitin have been commonly used for many years for the relief of pain in the joints, such as the knees.

Why will glucosamine and chondroitin supplements not be prescribed anymore?

There is very little evidence that glucosamine and chondroitin supplements reduce joint pain.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) says that glucosamine and chondroitin supplements **should not be offered to treat osteoarthritis** ('wear-and-tear' of the joints).

What can I do if I still want to take glucosamine and chondroitin supplements?

Supplements can be bought over-the-counter from a pharmacy (chemist), supermarket or health food shop.

A dose of 1500mg daily may be tried but should be stopped if there is no improvement after three months. **People who have seafood allergies or those taking warfarin should not take glucosamine.** Ask a pharmacist for advice.

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP or the person who prescribed the medication to you
- National and local charities can offer advice and support
- The NICE information for patients can be found at:
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg177/ifp/chapter/About-this-information
- The Patient and Client Council can also offer support and advice:
<http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/> or call 0800 917 0222.