

## **Fact or Fiction Part 2: Magnetic Bracelets, Arthroscopic Surgery, Ice vs. Heat Glucosamine, and Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

### **Key Points and References**

Will glucosamine help my arthritis?

- UNCERTAIN
- There is currently not enough evidence to support or refute this claim
- Results from current research trends towards improvements in pain, function, and increasing joint space, but there is nothing conclusive yet
- Glucosamine appears safe for most people, but be sure to check with your doctor before trying it, especially if you have diabetes

Will omega-3 fatty acids help with the inflammation associated with arthritis?

- UNCERTAIN
- Inflammation can make joints swollen, red and painful
- Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to decrease joint inflammation for people with rheumatoid arthritis
- Research shows that there may be similar effects for people with osteoarthritis, but more human research is needed
- Fatty fish, like salmon and sardines, flaxseed and walnuts are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids
  - It can also be taken as a nutritional supplement
- Check with a nutritionist and/or doctor about the amount you should take to reduce joint pain

Will copper bracelets help my arthritis?

- NO!!
- There is no evidence to support that a copper or magnetic bracelet is any better than a placebo bracelet

Will arthroscopic surgery help my arthritis?

- NO!

- Evidence shows that people who get arthroscopic surgery (including removal of scar tissue, or rinsing of the joint) do NO better than those who do not get surgery after 1 year
  - This is in terms of function and pain
- In fact, most people who get arthroscopic surgery have more initial pain after the surgery

Which is better, ice or heat?

- Heat promotes inflammation--the process associated with arthritis--and so may not be appropriate for people with arthritis
- Using a hot pack can loosen up the joint and make it feel better for a short period of time
- Ice decreases inflammation and has been shown to reduce swelling and improve muscle function around a swollen joint
  - Ice may be especially helpful during a flare-up when the joint is swollen
- Effects from both ice and heat are small and temporary
- In general, do what feels good to you, but avoid heat during flare-ups or when the joint is swollen

### **Online resources**

- 10 things you should know about glucosamine:  
<http://osteoarthritis.about.com/od/alternativetreatments/a/glucosamine.htm>
- Overview of omega-3 fatty acids:  
<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/omega-3-000316.htm>
- How omega-3 fatty acids can reduce inflammation:  
<http://www.arthritistoday.org/nutrition-and-weight-loss/healthy-eating/food-and-inflammation/fatty-acids-benefits.php>

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