

What supplements should be avoided if you have arthritis?

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Arthritis is an inflammatory condition that causes swelling and pain in the joints. It can occur at any age. No matter how old you are or what stage of life you are in, if you have this condition, you are not alone in wondering whether dietary supplements can help relieve your pain. According to one study, about 63% of people with arthritis reported taking medications or supplements.

There are reasons to try some of these over-the-counter products. Many supplements have been studied to prove their effectiveness in reducing the pain, stiffness, and soreness that come with the condition. But not every pill marketed to treat arthritis is a miracle cure. In fact, some supplements may even have side effects.

If you're looking to relieve arthritis symptoms, think twice before taking any of these supplements.

Supplements Arthritis Patients Should Avoid

Red yeast rice

Many people use red yeast rice to lower cholesterol—but some also use it as a supplement for arthritis. This is due to its high calcium and magnesium content—two nutrients important for bone health. However, red yeast rice's positive effects on cholesterol may be offset by its negative effects on joint health. Like statin drugs, red

yeast rice can cause muscle pain and joint discomfort, says Pacheco. It may also affect the safety and effectiveness of some prescription medications.

Chaparral

This plant, also known as *Larrea tridentata*, is a shrub native to California, Arizona, and northern Mexico. Because it contains natural components that are high in antioxidants, it is sometimes used as an agent to reduce arthritis.

However, in the 1990s, the use of chaparral as a dietary supplement led to dozens of hospitalizations for emergency liver transplants and cirrhosis. In short, it is not suitable for arthritis (and other health conditions). Consuming even small amounts can cause significant health problems, especially liver toxicity. No human studies have been conducted to support its use, as the risks far outweigh any potential benefits.



Arnica

Arnica can be applied to the skin to relieve aching, sore joints. One study found that its pain-relieving effects were comparable to ibuprofen in people with arthritis. But for some people, topical application can cause skin problems such as rashes, itching, or dryness.

While such side effects from topical arnica can be unpleasant, taking arnica orally has even more serious drawbacks. Arnica should not be taken orally unless under the close supervision of a physician, as consumption, especially in concentrated amounts, can lead to a host of serious side effects, some of which can be fatal.

Cat's claw

Cat's claw is a popular herbal supplement that is sometimes used to relieve pain associated with arthritis. Cat's claw is high in anti-inflammatory properties, which is why it is thought to be an effective treatment for arthritis.

However, research on this herb for arthritis is limited and outdated. Furthermore, this herb can cause side effects such as nausea and stomach upset. This supplement may interact with some medications, including those that lower blood pressure and cholesterol.



Tips for controlling arthritis

When it comes to managing arthritis, supplements aren't the only option. In fact, there are many lifestyle changes you can make to help manage your condition.

1. **Eat an anti-inflammatory diet** . Since arthritis is an inflammatory condition, prioritizing foods with anti-inflammatory properties can help control symptoms. Consider a Mediterranean-style diet or another anti-inflammatory diet that includes whole grains, healthy fats, lean proteins, and plenty of produce. 'Foods like salmon, sardines, berries, oranges, kiwi, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, nuts, seeds, and olive oil are great foods to incorporate into your diet more often,' says Pacheco.
2. **Limit highly processed foods.** On the other hand, reducing inflammation is also about what you don't eat. Limit added sugars and highly processed foods as much as possible, as they can increase inflammation.⁷
3. **Get moving.** Regular physical activity can strengthen the muscles around inflamed joints, reduce joint pain, and improve your mood. Whether it's taking a walk around the block after dinner or tending to the lawn, try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

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