

From our friends at BACK TO HERBS 07/22/09

News You Can Use

The Key to the Fountain of Youth - Hyaluronic Acid (HA)

According to ABC news reporting, the people in a village in Japan live a long long time. An unusually long time. So much so that the attention of medical investigators was captured and after a careful analysis of every single detail of their lifestyle, it was determined that they are unusually long lived because of their diet which contains high amounts of hyaluronic acid from starchy root vegetables.

Bill Sardi, in his book about this Japanese village called Yuzurihara entitled [How To Live 100 Years Without Growing Old](#), writes about the people in this little village about 2 hours outside of Tokyo. Ten times the usual number of octogenarians in an average population lives to be more than 85 years old and not just living but young looking and feeling youthful with thick hair, smooth skin, flexible joints, and most don't need reading glasses. In 2004 he wrote, "About two years ago I began to investigate hyaluronic acid (HA), the water-gelling molecule of the human body. Just 1000 milligrams of pure HA can gel 6 quarts of water. When the human body is young, HA is abundant, cushioning joints and nerves and filling space in between cells in the connective tissue. With advancing age HA production by fibroblast cells dissipates and humans essentially shrivel up, dry out, and begin to look old. The skin wrinkles, the eye and brain shrink, the joint spaces narrow, bone begins to rub on bone, the hair thins, and humans begin to look old".



HA is a molecule that occurs naturally. It is found in the vitreous fluid of the eye, in synovial fluid (the liquid that bathes the cartilage in the joints), in all the tissues of the body with the highest concentrations in the extracellular matrix of skin. Abundant amounts are in many locations where connective tissue disorders are most common – joints, eyes, skin, and heart valve. Hyaluronic acid maintains and regulates moisture in tissues and facilitates the transport of nutrients into cells and removes metabolic waste. Optimum levels are essential for the health of joints and tissues.

Skin-In subcutaneous tissues, HA functions as a cementing agent and has anti-inflammatory and anti-edematous properties. It is found that fetuses do not scar because of high levels of HA in amniotic fluid. Hyaluronic acid facilitates the healing and regeneration of surgical wounds. Topically, HA is a successful treatment for actinic keratoses, the third most common skin complaint in the US. In a gel form, HA treats gingivitis.

Abnormalities in HA have been found to contribute or cause mitral valve prolapse in the heart, TMJ, joint instability, osteoarthritis, detached retinas, muscle contractions, rachitic skeletal features, i.e. scoliosis, bowed limbs, hypermobility, glaucoma, poor scar formation, premature wrinkling, fibromyalgia, and premature aging.

Osteoarthritis-the changes in HA levels in the cartilage lead to degradation of the cartilage.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis include:

- **Pain**, commonly in the hands, hips, knees, feet, and sometimes in the spine. Pain usually is related to activity of the joint and is worse at the end of the day or after periods of activity. As the disease progresses, pain is present even during rest.
- **Stiffness** (lasting less than 1 hour) after periods of inactivity, such as in the morning after a night's sleep or after sitting for a long time.
- **Limited joint motion.**
- **Tenderness and occasional swelling.**
- **Joint deformity** (usually in later stages of osteoarthritis).
- **Joint cracking or "creaking" often accompanied by pain.** This creaking also may occur in a normal joint and is usually painless.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis range from minor to severe. Symptoms may depend on which joints are involved. If your weight-bearing joints (such as hips and knees) are affected, it often results in more problems than if you have osteoarthritis in non-weight-bearing joints, such as your fingers. Usually, osteoarthritis is limited to one set of joints, such as both knees. But osteoarthritis may affect more than one location in the body (for example, the knees and hands). Osteoarthritis usually only causes symptoms in one or more joints. Symptoms that affect the whole body, such as fever, weight loss, or rash, are not seen in osteoarthritis.

As osteoarthritis becomes more severe, symptoms may include a total loss of function in the affected joints.

Some medical conditions can cause symptoms similar to osteoarthritis.

Most common:

- **Bursitis/tendinopathy**, strains, or sprains to the tissues around the joints, such as ligaments or tendons. These may occur from overuse of the joint or from a physical injury.
- **Fibromyalgia**
- **Polymyalgia rheumatica**
- **Gout or pseudogout**
- **Low back pain**

EverFlex® with Hyaluronic Acid offers the benefits of glucosamine, chondroitin, MSM, hyaluronic acid and devil's claw in one convenient tablet. Glucosamine helps maintain the integrity, lubrication and mobility of joints. Chondroitin promotes cartilage tissue generation and attracts fluid into the cartilage, making it more shock absorbent. Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) is a form of biologically active sulfur that is found in the human diet. Sulfur is important to joint health for a wide variety of processes. Hyaluronic acid is an important component of cartilage that plays a crucial role in joint motion and homeostasis. HA promotes the viscosity and elasticity of the fluid surrounding the joints.

Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack and Chris Ritchason
Back to Herbs Team

References:

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