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## Joint Health

### The Basics:

Once your veterinarian has recommended a joint supplement, or you are being proactive by starting your horse on joint supplements, you will have a big choice to make. What one and what type do I use?

Joint health is a large market in the horse industry today. There are hundreds of products and you should know the basics before starting your horse on them. There are 2 main categories: injectable products and oral products. Injectable products are considered drugs so they are regulated by the FDA and are safe, but must be purchased through a veterinarian. Oral joint supplements are considered nutraceuticals which means they are not regulated like drugs and the amount of each ingredient is not regulated. Basically this means that what is on the label may not be what is in the container. Some companies voluntarily utilize current Good Manufacturing Process (cGMP) and are sold only through veterinarians to make their product safer and a higher quality for your horse.

### What ingredients do I look for?

Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate: These are the ones that everyone knows about. They work together to repair joints.

Hyaluronic acid (HA): It is a component of the synovial fluid, which lubricates the joint and helps form the building blocks of the cartilage. This is also often used in joint injections.

You need at least 10 grams or 10,000mg of the Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate per day to achieve adequate levels in the horse's joints.

### Which oral products will provide me with the required levels and are safe for my horse?

- GLC 5500 (available here)
- Platinum Performance's Ortho-Chon II HA
- Cosequin ASU



### **The basics on the injectables:**

Adequan: It is similar to an injectable glucosamine. It can be given at home in the muscle. It benefits all the joints. It is started with a loading dose of an injection every 4 days for a month. Then it is a once a month injection.



Legend: Legend is composed of Hyalauronic acid. It can be given IV for a systemic effect or injected into a specific joint for a local effect. The IV injection works rapidly but only provides a benefit for 4-7 days. The injection into the joint lasts up to 6 months.

### **Other possibilities:**

If your horse has a specific joint that is affecting him/her your veterinarian will also discuss other options with you. The options are injections of other things into the joint, like steroids with or without HA.

There are also topical anti-inflammatories that can be applied to a specific joint. The 2 products are DMSO and Surpass. Talk with your veterinarian about them.

Sometimes the horse will also be on oral anti-inflammatories to help with joint problems. Bute, Banamine and Equioxx are all used to decrease pain and inflammation in joints. Some horses will need both originally, but can be taken off after the supplements or injections have taken effect. Long term use of these drugs cause other problems like ulcers, colitis, etc so it is always better to switch a horse over to a supplement for long term treatment.

