



HEALTH SOLUTIONS INC.
A Nutraceutical Company

MSM & Joint Health



Creaking joints may be an inevitability of aging, but that's no comfort to the millions who suffer from the resulting pain and immobility. Joints can also be affected by wear and tear from injury or weight bearing, as well as by degenerative joint diseases such as the most common form, osteoarthritis. Supplements combining glucosamine (typically as glucosamine sulfate) and chondroitin sulfate still reign in this market. However, these ingredients have seen slowing sales—some argue because of market maturity, while others cite controversial science. While it's unlikely that any other ingredients will eclipse these established mainstays any time soon, companies are also seeing opportunities for alternatives.

MSM

Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM), an organic sulfur compound, is among the next best-known ingredients for joint health. While SPINS data show MSM still being a fraction of the business led by glucosamine-chondroitin combos, MSM has also not seen the same rate of sales decline as glucosamine and chondroitin. In fact, in the food-drug-mass channel, MSM gained 2% in sales in the past year, according to SPINS. (In the natural channel, sales were down 0.5%.)

Generally synthetically produced for supplements, MSM is purported to address joint health on several fronts, including preventing cartilage degradation and alleviating inflammation. While more human research will elucidate further benefits and mechanisms of MSM, Bergstrom Nutrition (Vancouver, WA) is one supplier whose OptiMSM ingredient has been studied in a human clinical pilot trial. Published in 2006 in *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage* (Kim LS et al.), the 50-patient trial examined the effects of 3 g of OptiMSM, twice daily for 12 weeks, against placebo in mild-to-moderate knee osteoarthritis. According to the researchers, OptiMSM improved symptoms of pain and physical dysfunction. "Thus, while large, long-term, dose-response studies in a more diverse patient population are warranted, MSM should be considered in certain OA patient populations," they stated.