

Chapter 4

Arthritis

Over 21 million Americans suffer from arthritis according to the Arthritis Foundation. This arthritis can be relatively mild with minor pain some of the time or very severe with major pain and loss of mobility. Arthritis is the number one cause of disability for people over 65.

Conventional medical treatment uses a dangerous combination of painkillers whose purpose is only to stop the pain from the arthritis. Medication such as aspirin, cortisone, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs do not prevent or correct the problem. They do reduce pain, but can be very detrimental to the health of the patient, especially if taken for a long period of time.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can be especially harmful to the patient's joints. NSAIDs block the enzymes that help produce inflammatory compounds. However, they also inhibit the action of enzymes that help produce cartilage. Therefore, the patient will probably have some pain relief while taking the NSAIDs while at the same time they may be actually making the arthritic process worse.

How about other more natural medications? Many patients have reported positive effects with glucosamine sulfate. Even more have reported good results from using MSM. Neither of these products seems to produce negative side effects while at the same time there is often greatly reduced pain. A number of medical studies have shown low levels of sulfur in arthritic joints. This would lead to the probability that lack of sulfur is a factor in osteoarthritis.

Most people with arthritis that visit hot spring health resorts report positive results. The water in these hot springs usually contains a large amount of natural sulfur. While the hot water may also be of benefit, the most important healing aspect of these hot springs is most likely the sulfur in the water.

There have been arthritis clinics using injections of DMSO that have claimed results in three days. These have not generally been reliable. It takes more than three days to completely treat arthritis and obtain lasting results. However, there are cases where immediate temporary relief is obtained.

There is general agreement among doctors who have treated arthritis patients and the patients themselves that DMSO is the best treatment for arthritis, whether it is osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. This treatment may be straight DMSO, or DMSO combined with other products. Also, the DMSO may be applied topically to the affected area, injected, or taken by mouth.

When DMSO was first used, most arthritis patients were treated topically with DMSO applied to the affected area. There are now topical lotions that contain DMSO and other products in combination that are even more effective than straight DMSO.

An example of a patient who got immediate results was a 67 year-old man who could not move his finger. A lotion containing DMSO and capsicum pepper was applied to this man's finger. A few minutes later he was moving his finger. He was amazed and kept moving the finger. His wife watched him move the finger and while watching asked: "Jack, can you really move that finger?" His answer was: "Yes, don't you see it moving?"

DMSO does several things to help improve arthritis and does not have the negative side effects of many other medications such as the NSAIDs. First DMSO greatly reduces the pain and muscle spasms around arthritic joints. It improves blood flow which helps bring needed nutrients to the damaged area. It provides biologically available sulfur to the damaged joint. DMSO also reduces inflammation.

It is my opinion that the most important factor about DMSO in the treatment of arthritis is the fact that DMSO is the most potent free radical scavenger known. Free radicals have been implicated as the leading or one of the leading causes of many degenerative ailments. It is logical that free radicals do play a role in both rheumatoid and osteoarthritis.

Free radical activity as a cause of arthritis was simply a logical theory for a period of time and to my knowledge no study of the free radical activity in arthritis has been done in the United States. However, a very good private study was performed in Brazil.

The study in Brazil involved 30 patients with the purpose of confirming the relationship between free radical synthesis and arthritis. This study was conducted at Centro Internacional de Medicina Preventia in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Even though osteoarthritis is a degenerative disease and rheumatoid arthritis is considered to be an autoimmune disease, they have certain things in common. The symptoms are similar, and both can severely cripple the patient.

This clinic regularly used DMSO to treat arthritis patients, and it was known that the treatment was of great benefit to the patient. However, this study was to verify that DMSO not only provided clinical improvement, but also reduced the formation of free radicals.

The patients chosen were regular patients at the clinic. Fifteen of the patients had osteoarthritis and 15 had rheumatoid arthritis. The HLB (Heiton-La Garde-Bradford) test which measures the reactive oxygen toxic species was used to test for free radical production.

The treatment used was the same as had been used on all arthritis patients for the previous five years. For this study 5ccs of DMSO were used along with B complex, vitamin C and magnesium sulfate. An infusion was given two times a week for five weeks, then once a month for 18 months. These patients were tested for free radicals before the study started, immediately after a DMSO infusion, and again after the study was completed. The results showed a 66% decrease in free radical production after DMSO administration. Following completion of the study there was a 52% decrease in free radical production from the level at the beginning.

With this protocol they have had good clinical improvement of symptoms in over 85% of the patients with osteoarthritis and 77% of the patients with rheumatoid arthritis. These results were long lasting and obtained without the use of any steroidal or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Nearly all the arthritis patients treated with DMSO that this writer is familiar with have noted improvement in both relief of pain and increased range of motion. One patient, who is now 63 years-old, was a high school football and basketball player. He later ran marathons (26 miles races) for over 20 years. He first noticed increasing pain in his knees and hips. Later he said he had pain everywhere. His doctor gave him prescriptions for more powerful pain killers and an injection of cortisone. He was told that he should be on pain killers for the rest of his life.

This man knew that the medications were harming his body, but he also wanted relief of pain. He was finally told to try more natural treatments. He found that there was slight improvement when he used glucosamine sulfate. One year later he was introduced to DMSO. A 90% solution of DMSO was applied to his knees every day, and he also drank DMSO—one teaspoonful every day in four ounces of juice. He immediately started to feel better and also noted increased energy. Two years later this man has little pain and says that he can also think more clearly.

Doctors who have treated arthritic patients with DMSO have recommended various combinations and methods of treatment. Some prefer topical application. Others prefer to have the patient drink the DMSO in juice or water. If the patient is taking many powerful medications it may be necessary to take great care in reducing and finally eliminating the medication.

Patients who have been on MSM, which is derived from DMSO, usually continue on MSM as it is not toxic and can be used when the patient does not want the DMSO breath odor. Those who are using glucosamine sulfate also can continue using it along with the DMSO.

Some patients have said that they feel better if they combine the DMSO with glucosamine sulfate. Others prefer to combine DMSO and MSM. There is no harm in

either or both combinations. The individual doctor can observe how his patients perform on the various combinations.

Often patients who have been on prescription medication for many years feel so good that they want to stop all other medication and rely solely on DMSO and other more natural products. This should not be done without medical supervision. If you are a patient who has been on a prescription for a long period of time, you should not stop or reduce the medication on your own no matter how well you feel. It is best to consult the doctor who wrote the original prescription and tell him or her that you feel well and would like to stop the prescription. You may need to stop the medication gradually over a period of days or even months. If this is the case you need professional help to avoid possible severe results.

Any doctor who treats patients who have arthritis should become thoroughly familiar with DMSO. The patient can be treated topically for localized arthritis such as in a finger or in a knee. The patient can be given injections or he can take it by mouth. Various combinations can be given with the doctor making the choice on how best to use the DMSO to best help the patient.