

# ***Info shared by Pitbull SA.***

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***South Africa.***

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## ***Cartilage.***

**Dr Chris Bessent**

*Sharing is caring!*

### **The joint protector.**

Each bony end is covered in a smooth, porcelain-like surface called joint (articular) cartilage.

It's the smooth surface of articular cartilage that allows unimpeded gliding and rotation of the joint.

Articular cartilage contains a high concentration of nerve fibres, which are so sensitive that even small changes in the viscosity (thickness or gooey-ness) of the joint fluid can cause an achiness in the joint.

The nerve-rich cartilage is meant to protect the joints from damage.

Visualize your dog jumping an over a fallen log on the trails. He jumps the log by launching his body into the air and then depends on the joints in his front limbs to absorb the shock of the landing. During the landing, his front limbs need to lock at his wrists and absorb the shock at the same time. In order to absorb the concussion of landing, all the elements of the joint need to work synergistically. If the supporting soft tissue isn't well balanced, the joint won't be properly supported and may be restricted or too loose in its movement. If the joint fluid is too thin, it will be less able to absorb the force of the landing and the bone endings may be allowed to bang together. The sponginess of the articular cartilage can help absorb some of this stress and will also signal the brain that the bone ends have painfully come in contact with one another. If the dog fails to respond to the pain, the bone ends can collide and cause damage to their cartilage – and in the worst case scenario, fracture the bones themselves.

### **Cartilage damage.**

With its limited potential for healing, damaged cartilage is replaced with an inferior type of cartilage called fibrocartilage that's prone to chipping and breaking.

If the joint capsule becomes inflamed, hydrolysing enzymes are released and disrupt the joint fluid by breaking down its proteins.

This loss of nourishing and shock absorbing joint fluid weakens the cartilage even further and the injured and worn joints face a downward spiral of jarring, friction and pain.

**Turmeric for joint pain: [Click Here!](#)**

**The rescue: Exercise & nutrients.**

Should you exercise a dog with hip dysplasia or suffers from arthritis?

Consistent repetitive motion in moderation helps to tone the muscles around the joint and this will support the joint and keep the joint fluid viscous.

Getting up and moving around is the best thing to maintain joint health.

But strenuous activity such as jumping and fast directional changes should be avoided in animals with existing joint damage or inflammation.

### **Getting the good fluids.**

A great source of these specialized fluids is in the joints of other animals.

For dogs eating a raw diet with ground or whole bones, the joints in that food can give them a good supply of joint protecting nutrients. However most pet foods today don't offer this.

Dogs eating a cooked diet or dogs with existing joint disease can benefit from some easily accessible joint supplements.

I would recommend adding, at the very least, glucosamine, chondroitin and hyaluronic acid.

These three nutrients can help replace lost viscosity of joint fluid, be used as a building block to repair joint cartilage, and to lubricate joints, respectively.

When glucosamine is given orally, about 30 to 40% is actually absorbed into the bloodstream.

Because chondroitin and hyaluronic acid are larger and don't pass the gastric barrier easily, only about 10% of these substances are absorbed into the bloodstream, while the rest is broken down in the stomach.

Although this is a small amount, it's better than no supplementation at all.

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