

Arthritis is a disease that affects the joints. There are several forms, but the most common are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis is a degenerative disease that most often affects the fingers, neck, lower back, hips, knees, and other joints. It is more common with age and in cases of injury to the joint, overuse of joints and with excess weight. Over 20 million Americans have osteoarthritis. Over 50% of people develop this condition by the age of 65.

Rheumatoid arthritis affects over 2 million people, more than 60% of them are women. It can happen at any age, but usually between the ages of 20 and 45.

What are the symptoms of arthritis?

Arthritis can cause pain in the joints; stiffness, especially after waking up and after a period of rest; pain that gets worse after the use of the joint; local tenderness; loss of function; swelling of the tissues surrounding the joint; decreased mobility; and creaking and cracking of the joints with movement.

How is arthritis treated?

The usual "treatment" of arthritis involves the use of pain killers, so called Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs.) Examples are Aspirin, Motrin, Feldene, Naprosyn and many others. These medications help relieve the pain of arthritis, but NONE OF THEM DO ANYTHING TO ELIMINATE THE DISEASE ITSELF. In fact, studies show that continual use of NSAIDs **can actually accelerate the deterioration of the joints and make arthritis worse!**

Are there any alternatives?

Many natural substances have been found to have a very positive and healing effect on the joints. Glucosamine Sulfate and Chondroitin Sulfate are the precursors of the cartilage, which lines the joints and assures smooth, pain-free movement. Studies show that **velvet antler** is very high in these, as well as Keratan Sulfate. These molecules of glycosaminoglycans (or GAGs) are the core proteins that help joints to rebuild.

Both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are associated with the loss of the ability to synthesize or maintain collagen type II. Collagen type I AND II are abundant in **velvet antler** harvested at the right stage of antler growth. Collagen is important in that it reduces inflammation and helps healthy, **elastic**, cartilage to rebuild.

Since the antler has such a fast rate of growth, this means that it also contains growth factors. IGF-I is found in **velvet antler** in great concentration. IGF-I encourages the absorption of chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine sulfate by acting as a "receptor", allowing these proteins to stimulate collagen reproduction. IGF-II is also abundant and allows for fast recovery and rebuilding of overworked tissue and stimulate renewed nerve impulse.

Instead of relying on artificial hormones and synthetic proteins, let your body make it's own growth hormone by supplying it with the right "raw materials", as in **velvet antler**, and see what can happen!