

Managing Osteoarthritis Pain With Medicines

A Review of the Research for Adults



Is This Summary Right for Me?

Yes, if:

A doctor* said you have osteoarthritis (pronounced ah-stee-oh-arth-RYE-tis). Osteoarthritis is different from other kinds of arthritis such as rheumatoid or psoriatic arthritis.

The doctor suggested one of the following medicines for your osteoarthritis pain, and you want to know what research says about the medicine.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

Celecoxib (Celebrex®)

Ibuprofen (Motrin®/Advil®)

Etodolac (Lodin®)

Diclofenac (Cambisam®/Cataflam®)

Meloxicam (Mobic®)

Voltaren®/Voltarol®/Zipso®

Nabumetone (Relafen®)

Naproxen (Aleve®/Naprosyn®)

Aspirin

You are considering taking the nutritional supplements glucosamine or chondroitin for your osteoarthritis pain.

No, if:

A doctor has not said that you have osteoarthritis.

You are under 18. The information in this summary is from research on adults.

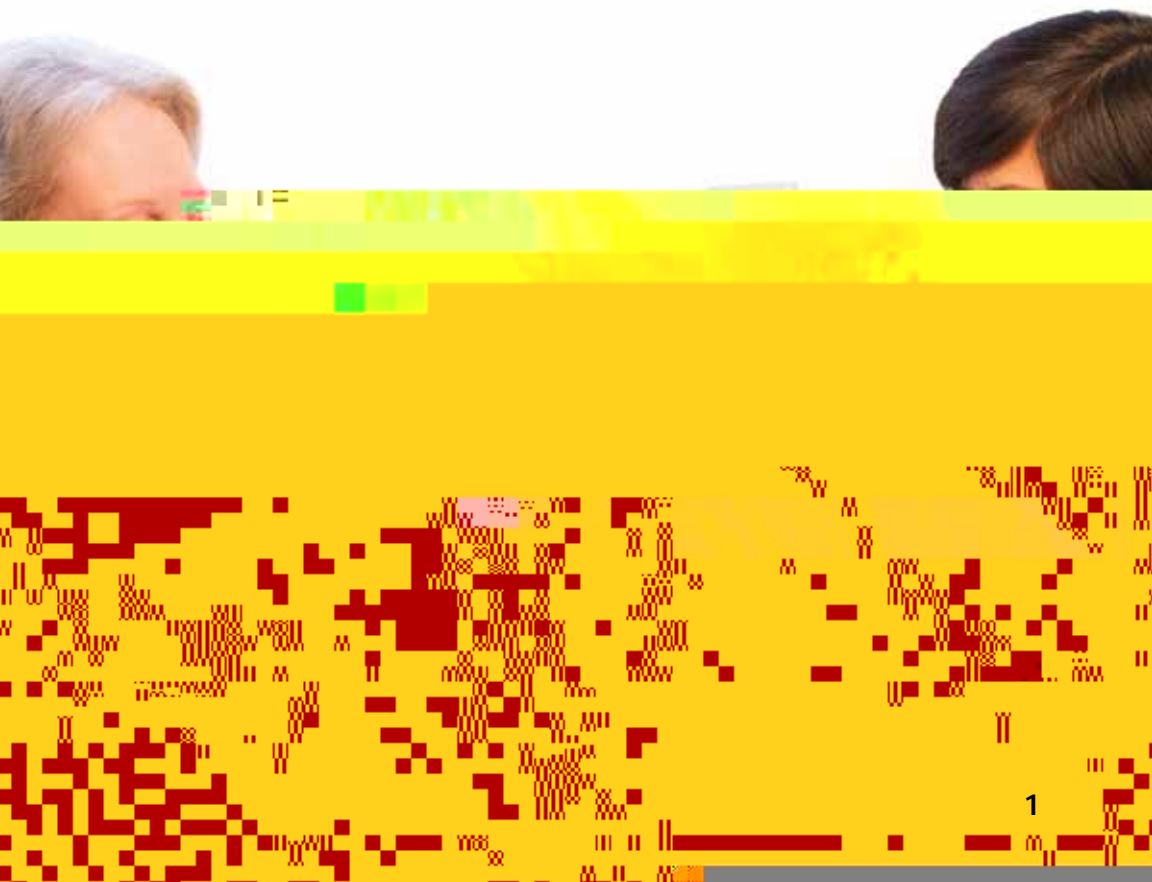
* In this summary, the term “doctor” refers to the health care professionals who may take care of you, including your physician, rheumatologist, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

What does this summary cover?

This summary describes how to manage osteoarthritis pain by using a group of medicines called “analgesics” (pronounced an-al-JEEZ-iks). It also discusses the research about different types of analgesics. It talks about each medicine’s ability to relieve pain and the risks for serious side effects. It can help you talk with your doctor about managing your osteoarthritis pain. Other ways to manage pain from osteoarthritis, such as surgery, narcotic medicines, or steroids, are not included in this summary.

Where does the information come from?

Researchers funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), a Federal Government agency, updated a review of the research on analgesics for osteoarthritis. The updated review included 273 research studies published between January 2005 and January 2011. The report was reviewed by clinicians, researchers, experts, and the public. You can read the report at www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/analgesicsupdate.cfm.



Understanding Your Condition

What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a painful condition in which joints become swollen and stiff.

Cartilage is the soft tissue between the bones that meet at a joint. It acts as a cushion and allows your connecting bones to move smoothly with

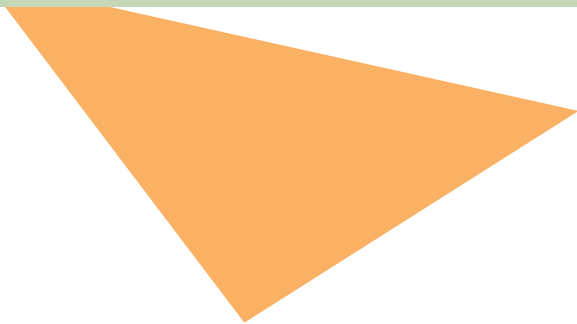
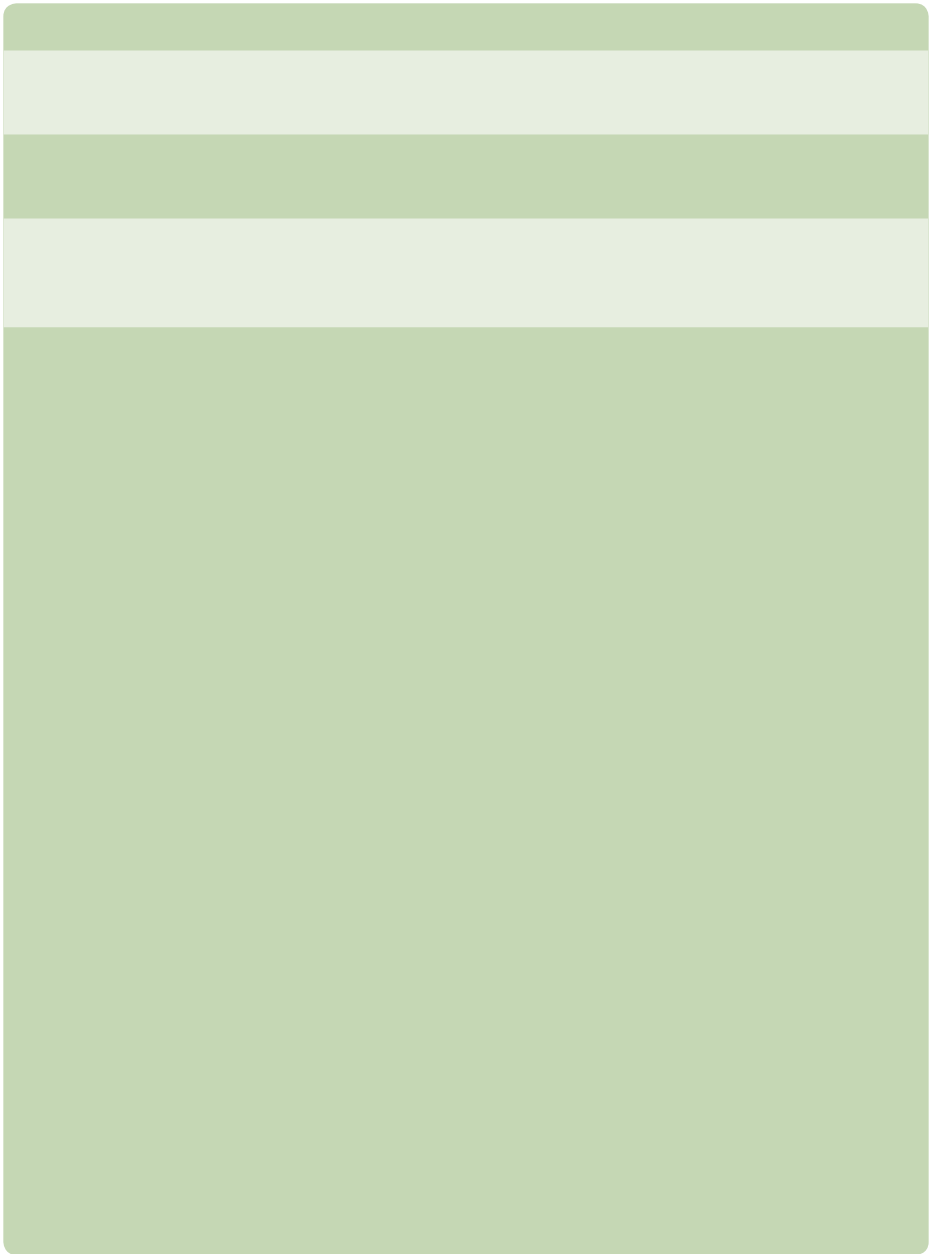


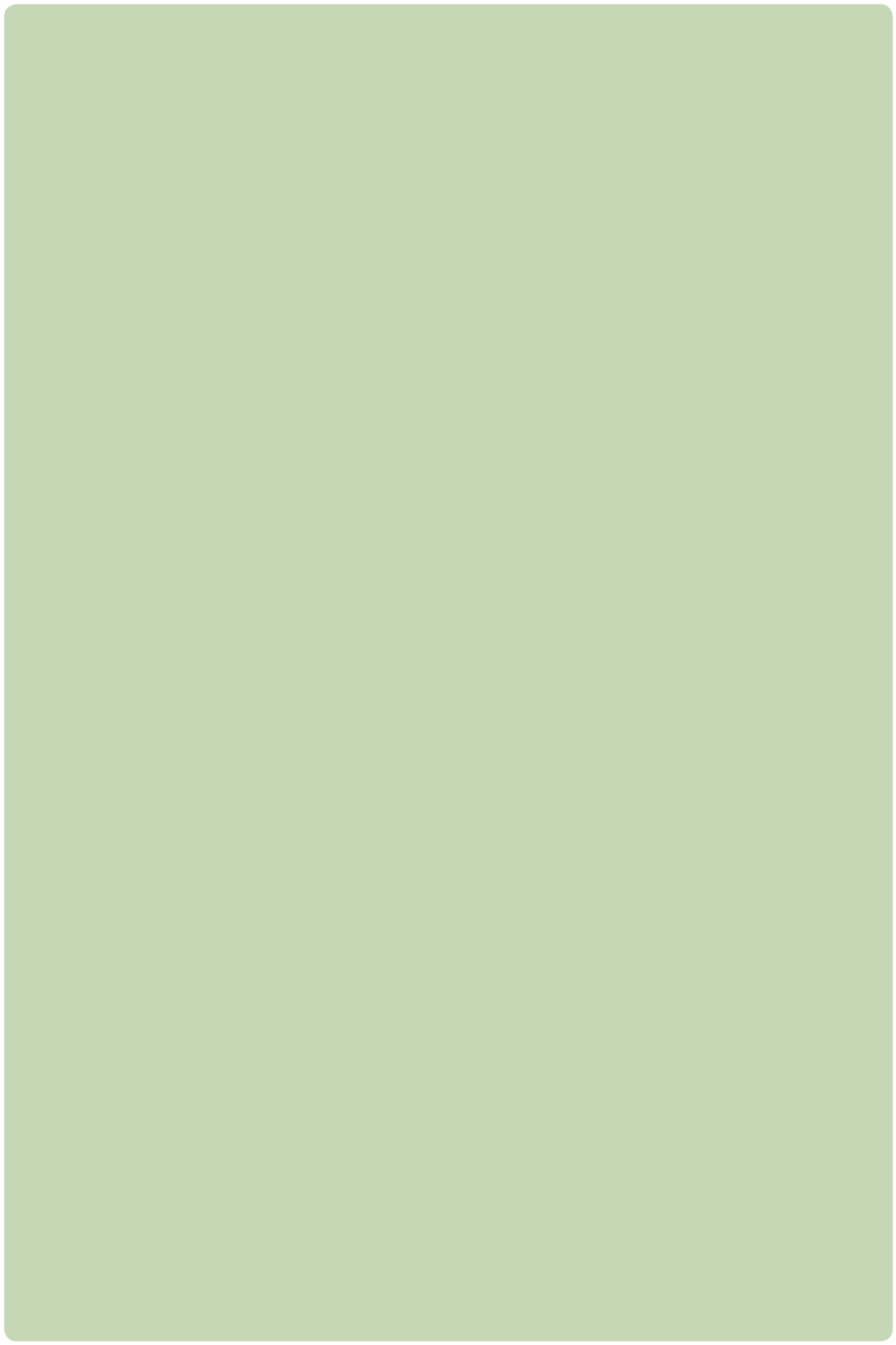
Understanding Your Options

What does it mean to manage the pain?

There is no cure for osteoarthritis. However, your doctor may suggest one or more of the following to help you manage your pain:

Analgesics for Osteoarthritis Pain





All NSAIDs can worsen blood pressure, heart function, and kidney function. However, there are no clear differences between naproxen, ibuprofen, diclofenac, etodolac, meloxicam, or nabumetone in the risk of high blood pressure, heart failure, or poor kidney function.

Making a Decision

What should I think about when deciding?

Each pain medicine has a different set of benefits and risks, and each comes with a trade-off. Talk with your doctor to weigh the benefits and risks and to decide which medicine is best for you. You can discuss:

- How much pain and swelling you feel and how often you feel it.

- How well each medicine works to relieve pain and swelling.

- How comfortable you and your doctor are about your risks for serious side effects.

- Your age and other health issues that may affect your choice of pain medicine.

- The convenience and cost of having medicines available by prescription or over the counter.

What are the costs of analgesics?

The cost to you for analgesics depends on:

- The type of health insurance that you have.

- The dose (amount) you need.

Whether the medicine is available in generic form or is sold without a prescription (“over the counter”). Some NSAIDs are available over the counter, but your insurance may not cover the cost of these medicines if you buy them this way.

The cost of over-the-counter analgesics depends on the pharmacy brand, and how much you buy at one time. When you shop around for the best price, you should also consider the quality of the product.

Wholesale Prices of Prescription Analgesics



Source

The information in this summary comes from the report Analgesics for Osteoarthritis: An Update of the 2006 Comparative Effectiveness Review, October 2011.

The report was produced by the Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center through funding by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

For a copy of the report or for more information about AHRQ and the Effective Health Care Program, go to www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/analgesicsupdate.cfm. Additional information came