

Dog joint supplements: a practical ingredient checklist

Use it with any product, with the label in your hand. Tick each line, then take the sheet to your vet.

		CHECK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
☐	1	Amount per daily serving	Amounts given per serving, with the serving defined. Convert per-chew or per-ml figures into one day for your dog.
☐	2	Serving matched to your dog	Directions by weight band, in lb or kg. Be wary of one size for every dog.
☐	3	Named actives with amounts	Every active ingredient has a number. A blend with no amounts tells you nothing.
☐	4	Form of each ingredient	E.g. glucosamine HCl or sulfate, which collagen type, which fatty acids and how many mg.
☐	5	Source of animal ingredients	Bovine, marine, poultry or shellfish. Matters for dogs with food sensitivities.
☐	6	Everything else in the bottle	Flavourings, sweeteners, fillers. Xylitol is dangerous to dogs (ASPCA).
☐	7	A quality signal you can verify	In the US, the NASC Quality Seal means an independent audit. Otherwise ask for batch test results.
☐	8	Honest claims	A label that promises to treat or prevent a disease is making a drug claim (FDA).
☐	9	Your dog's situation	Medication, allergies, other conditions. Tell your vet what you plan to give.
☐	10	A trial plan	Start date, what you will watch, and a review date agreed with your vet.
☐	11	Cost per day	Price divided by the days the product lasts at your dog's dose.
☐	12	Return terms	Read the guarantee or refund policy before ordering.

What the research says

Systematic reviews found low-strength evidence for most nutraceuticals in canine osteoarthritis. Omega-3 fatty acids stood out; collagen showed weak efficacy, and glucosamine with chondroitin showed no clear effect (Vandeweerd 2012; Barbeau-Gregoire 2022). PDSA: joint supplements are not a replacement for medication and do not work for every dog.

Two-week mobility notes

Fill in a line whenever you notice a change. Film a short clip of your dog walking, climbing a step and getting up. Contact your vet immediately if your dog is in severe pain or cannot put a leg down.

DATE	WHAT YOUR DOG WAS DOING	WHAT WAS DIFFERENT (STIFF, SLOW, AVOIDED, LIMPING, WHICH LEG)	TIME OF DAY	BETTER OR WORSE THAN USUAL

Questions for my vet

- What do you think is behind my dog's change in movement?
- Should I try a supplement, and which active ingredients at what daily amount?
- Is my dog at a healthy weight, and what should I change?
- Does anything my dog already takes interact with what I am considering?
- When should we review how it is going?