Glucosamine	
Description	Glucosamine is a substance made in the body and which occurs naturally in our joints and connective tissues.
Function & Use	It is used to build and repair cartilage. May help to maintain healthy joints. Has been used to relieve pain, stiffness and swelling of the knees, fingers and other joints. Can help reduce arthritic back and neck pain. Has been used to speed up the healing of sprains and strengthen joints. A recent Cochrane review of 20 randomised controlled trials demonstrated the effectiveness of Glucosamine in improvement of pain and function in osteoarthritis and also demonstrated its safety[2].
Dietary Sources	Small amounts are provided in the diet by animal and fish products.
Commercial Availability & Dosage	Glucosamine comes in capsule, tablet or powder forms. It is available as a synthetically manufactured dietary supplement in the form of glucosamine sulphate and glucosamine hydrochloride. A dose of glucosamine sulphate 500 mg three times a day (1500 mg daily) is generally recommended.
Precautions / Contra-Indications	Do not take if you are allergic to shellfish.
Pregnancy & Breastfeeding[1]	No problems have been reported, but there have not been sufficient studies to guarantee the safety of glucosamine in pregnancy and breast-feeding. Glucosamine during pregnancy and breastfeeding is probably best avoided.
Adverse Effects[1]	Glucosamine is relatively non-toxic, although some side-effects reported include constipation, diarrhoea, heartburn, nausea, drowsiness, headache and skin rash.
Interactions[1]	None known. Although insulin or oral hypoglycaemics *may* be less effective.
References	1. Mason, P. Dietary Supplements. Pharmaceutical Press, London, 2001. 2. Towheed et al. Glucosamine therapy for treating osteoarthrtitis. Cochrane database, issue 2, 2005.