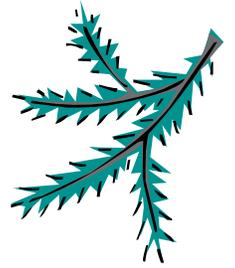


Pycnogenol® Pine Bark

Cuts Down Need for NSAIDs



It's no doubt that NSAIDs powerfully quench arthritis pain but they do so at high cost, with noted GI bleeds for most and associated cardiovascular events in newer COX-2 inhibitors. What if you could decrease those risks by taking less (perhaps even giving them up entirely) and get side benefits like less pain and improved function too?

The healing power of pine bark dates back to 1534 when French explorer Jacques Cartier and his crew were saved by native Indians with a mixture of pine needles and tree bark tea. We know pine bark today as Pycnogenol®, a brand ingredient that still has the power to “save” your health. As a free radical scavenger, Pycnogenol® includes a class of compounds known as oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs) and other bioflavonoids with the ability to spare vitamins C and E. An extensive list of benefits has surfaced in its 35 year history for cardiovascular and circulatory systems, inflammation, anti-aging skin care, diabetes, endometriosis, eye health, leg swelling, muscle cramping, oxidative stress and more. No less than 56 published clinical studies and 220 scientific publications attest to its safety and effectiveness. Pycnogenol® accomplishes this through its excellent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory protective actions.

It appears that Pycnogenol® is effective for joints, too. We all know that loss of cartilage and joint cushioning occurs in arthritis and with age. Those commonly affected are fingers, hips, knees and spine. With increased abrasion, local tissue gets inflamed, further reducing flexibility and causing pain—which agitates more inflammatory cells and enzymes. If this dual mechanism of insult and inflammation continues, eventually the only recourse is joint replacement. Pycnogenol® has been shown to reduce damaging enzymes, including COX-2, 5-LOX by 78% [Canali et al, 2008] and the inflammatory marker of C-reactive protein by 72% in osteoarthritis patients [Belcaro et al, 2008]. Additionally, Pycnogenol® adds the antioxidant benefit of reducing free radical scavenger activity against joints.

These findings were corroborated in three separate placebo-controlled, double-blind studies for arthritis. The Western Ontario MacMaster (WOMAC) score was used to assess lower extremity pain and function throughout the studies. The first trial [Farid et al, 2007] was a pilot involving 37 patients for 3 months on NSAIDs. The Pycnogenol® group required less drugs and reported 43% less pain, 35% less stiffness and 52% increased physical function on only 50 mg a day. The placebo group showed no significant changes and required increased pain medication. In the second study done in Europe [Cisar et al, 2008], 100 patients were enrolled and given 150 mg per day with similar results. Additionally, a follow-up two weeks after Pycnogenol® was discontinued showed a continued benefit without a sudden recurrence of pain symptoms.

Subjects on 100 mg of Pycnogenol® in the third study cut their pain, stiffness and physical function scores in half by the end of the third month. The control had no change in stiffness and marginal on function. Medication use decreased 58% for Pycnogenol® takers and only 1% for controls. Plus researchers observed a significant drop in GI problems for subjects on Pycnogenol® they credited to lower NSAID use. Emotional aspects of osteoarthritis and engagement in social activities were assessed as well (ability to interact with family, friends, loneliness, frustration, etc). At study end, the average high value of 31.4 dropped to 11.5. Pycnogenol® subjects won on treadmill testing, too, extending their distance from 68 meters to 198 meters. The control group had a modest 65 to 88 meter improvement. Total enrollment in this study: 156.

In all three groups, improvements were seen gradually over the course of the three months. In summary, Pycnogenol® offers relief for osteoarthritis by lowering joint pain and stiffness, restoring physical function and mobility and inhibiting inflammation—in a safe, effective way.

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