

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Supartz For Knees? What's That?

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

I'll do my best to explain this without getting too technical. If I had said it's viscosupplementation (20 letters, I'll save you counting) how many would have known what I was talking about? Raise your hands. No hands up.

I will never lose you by not explaining things. Hope all of you know that by now.

Ah, Supartz is _____, shall we say a pain relieving lubrication fluid that is injected into the knee joint to relieve the pain of arthritis.

It is the one I use in the office because I think it has given my patients the best pain relief. There are some others that are available that I have used also, but Supartz has given my patients more relief than the rest.

What is it?

Well, are you ready? It is a substance that is extracted from rooster combs. Seriously, a substance known as hyaluronic acid is present in many human and animal tissues. It is especially plentiful in rooster combs. It is the same substance that is so important in lubricating our joints.

Turns out that roosters and humans have lots more in common than what you thought!

Bad Joints

A joint with arthritis doesn't make very good lubrication fluid. It is one of the reasons that knee arthritis hurts, but not the only reason. In an arthritic joint there are several things going wrong, but poor lubrication fluid is a very important reason.

How Does It Work?

I was afraid somebody was going to ask that. Answer: No one knows for sure. There are good technical theories too complicated to include here. Supartz is a pretty thick substance, but it doesn't just sit in the

knee like goo, lubricating things. It mysteriously causes knee lining cells that produce lubrication to make more normal lubrication. In doing so, pain is relieved.

Where Does The Arthritis Go?

No where. While it relieves the pain of arthritis, it does not cure the arthritis. The pain leaves and the knee may feel like it moves more freely. Pretty amazing stuff, really.

Who Gets Supartz?

Very good question. It's not for everybody whose knee hurts. Everyone who comes to my office who is at least middle age that has knee trouble thinks they have "arthritis". That certainly is not the case. True arthritis can only be determined by a careful history, orthopaedic examination and plain x-rays done standing. For the most part Orthopaedic Surgeons are in the best position to decide if Supartz will help a particular patient.

Out of time again and so much more to cover. Can you please rejoin me next week for much more valuable information.

Until then for all the orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information you could want check out our office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can also take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

The goal of our office is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush