



## The more you know, the better you can manage your osteoarthritis pain.

If you're like most people who have recently been diagnosed with osteoarthritis (OA), you've probably got a lot of questions.

Through this guide, you will find answers to some commonly asked questions that will help you and your physician determine whether you might become one of the many people who benefit from using Synvisc® to manage your osteoarthritis symptoms.

If you have a question that is not answered by this guide, please call the Synvisc® patient information toll-free number at **1-800-796-7991** for more information.

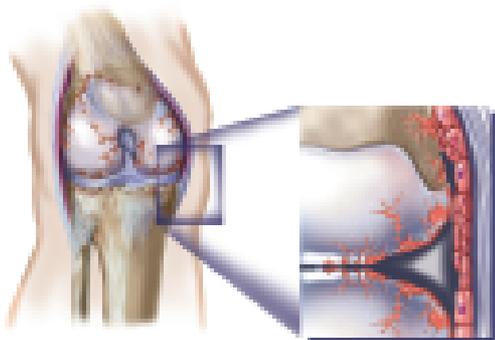


## What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a condition that can affect the mobility and elasticity of your joints. OA pain is felt most in weight bearing joints: The knee is the largest weight bearing joint in the body and therefore most commonly affected by osteoarthritis. In a knee with OA, there is a breakdown of synovial (joint) fluid and cartilage, the slippery tissue that covers and protects the ends of bones in the joint. In any joint OA, most patients feel pain, stiffness and loss of movement. In severe cases, bones can rub against each other.



normal knee



osteoarthritic knee

*Detail of osteoarthritic joint showing erosion of cartilage and loss of synovial fluid.*

## What are the stages of OA?

OA symptoms can range from very mild to very severe and often limits your everyday activities:

### Mild

Cartilage begins to wear down. Symptoms are generally mild, and may include pain that comes and goes.

### Moderate

Joint fluid may lose its ability to lubricate and cushion the affected joint. You may have more pain and difficulty in movement.

### Severe

Areas of cartilage may totally wear away, causing bones to rub against each other. You may experience significant pain.

The symptoms of OA are treatable, especially in the early stages. If you have pain or stiffness in your joints, talk to your doctor.

## Who is at risk for OA?

The cause of OA is unknown, but certain factors may put you at higher risk of developing it.

### Risk factors include:

- **Age**

Most people develop OA after age 45, and it is most common in people over age 65.

- **Obesity**

For every pound gained, you put three extra pounds of pressure on weight bearing joints such as your knees. Since the knees support the weight of your body, being overweight increases your risk of OA.

- **Gender**

OA is more prevalent in women, after age 55.

- **Heredity**

Genes responsible for making and maintaining cartilage may be linked with OA.

- **Injury or Overuse**

Studies have shown that people who have had a previous knee or hip injury more likely to develop OA than those who have never had an injury.

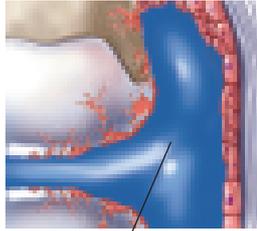
- **Muscle Weakness**

Weak thigh muscles have been shown to increase the risk of developing OA, especially in the knee.

If you have any OA risk factors, talk to your doctor. He or she can help you take steps to protect your joints.



## What is Synvisc®?



*Synvisc® in joint space*

Synvisc® is a Health Canada approved, pill-free\* treatment that can provide up to 12 months of OA pain relief. Injected directly into a joint such as the knee or hip, Synvisc® replaces damaged joint fluid with a natural elastoviscous substance that has cushioning and lubricating abilities similar to those of normal, healthy joint fluid.

## How does Synvisc® work?

Synvisc® goes right to work where the pain begins. Synvisc® is the only viscosupplement on the market that most closely mimics young, healthy, joint fluid restoring the level of lubrication and cushioning in the joint to that of a young, healthy knee or hip.

## What is Synvisc® made from?

Synvisc® is made from hylans, which are derivatives of hyaluronan. Synvisc® is drug free because hyaluronan occurs naturally in the body, in the tissues, fluids, on the surface of and in the cartilage of the joint. Hylan is simply an engineered form of hyaluronan – the beneficial component to healthy synovial fluid.

## How is Synvisc® given?

Synvisc® is injected directly into the affected joint. In the case of the knee, Synvisc® is injected in just 3 doctor visits, 1 week apart. Synvisc® is the only viscosupplement therapy in Canada that can offer pain relief for up to one year with one course of treatment. In the case of the hip, a single injection is recommended. However, some patients may benefit from a second injection 1-3 months after the first injection. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

## Will Synvisc® cure my OA?

There is no cure for OA. But successful treatment with Synvisc® can reduce or relieve your pain for up to 12 months, potentially increasing your mobility and comfort.

## What are the main benefits of Synvisc®?

Synvisc® can decrease or eliminate pain, reduce stiffness and help restore mobility and flexibility – all to help you return to a more active lifestyle.



## When will the treatment start to work?

In knee OA, while some patients may begin to feel better after the first injection, you need to have all 3 injections to get the maximum benefit. Most patients feel the greatest relief 8 to 12 weeks after the last injection.



## Is Synvisc® safe?

Yes. Laboratory and clinical studies have proven that Synvisc® does not cause general harmful reactions.

## Is Synvisc® safer than other medications my physician may prescribe?

Synvisc® is made from a substance that naturally occurs in your body and is not classified as a medication. There are no drugs of any kind in Synvisc®. The medical community and the government of Canada classify Synvisc® as a “device” because the action is physical – it goes directly to the site to work as a shock absorber and lubricant.

## Can Synvisc® cause temporary discomfort when it's injected?

Yes. In a small percentage of cases, within a day after the injection, local discomfort has been observed. This is manifested by localized pain and swelling. This discomfort is transient and does not necessarily interfere with the success of treatment.

## Do I need a prescription for Synvisc®?

You must have your physician's recommendation for Synvisc®: if your insurance plan covers the cost of Synvisc®, you will also need a prescription.

Synvisc® must be administered by a qualified physician. Discuss the potential benefits of Synvisc® treatment with your doctor to determine whether you are a suitable candidate. Only your physician can decide with you if Synvisc® is suitable to help manage your osteoarthritis.





## **Will I be able to carry on as usual during the course of my treatment?**

Absolutely. In fact, walking and exercising as usual actually helps the treatment. In the case of the knee, it is recommended that you continue your normal activities but it is important not to overuse the affected joint within the first 48 hours following the injection.

## **How long can I expect the Synvisc® benefits to last?**

Synvisc® is the only viscosupplement on the market indicated for up to 12 months of pain relief. However, everyone is different: even people with the same level of pain and inflammation experience different results.

## **What are the side effects?**

Because Synvisc® is a local (joint) therapy, not a systemic (entire body) therapy, Synvisc® frees you from potentially harmful side effects associated with some drug therapies, such as nausea – even ulcers. Synvisc® goes directly to the joint to function just as natural joint fluid does and acts as a protectant. There are no drugs in Synvisc® to enter your bloodstream and negatively affect your system.





## I think my OA pain is too bad for Synvisc® to help.

Your physician or specialist is the best one to judge whether Synvisc® could be beneficial for you. Our studies show that Synvisc® is most effective in treating people who:

- 1) have moderate to high knee pain
- 2) stiffness and decreased mobility
- 3) have osteoarthritis classified as being in the early stages of joint pathology
- 4) have not yet suffered severe cartilage damage.

Experience has shown that people with more advanced osteoarthritis have also had good results from Synvisc® treatment. So you may be pleasantly surprised.

## What does Synvisc® cost?

The cost is comparable to the annual cost of prescription drug therapy or other therapies. Remember, Synvisc® is a proven treatment for osteoarthritis of the knee.

The added benefit, of course, is that because Synvisc® is not a drug, it can be used without the possibility of potentially harmful side effects commonly associated with arthritic prescription medicines, or conflict with other medication you may be taking. If you have a corporate or personal medical insurance plan, it may reimburse you for the cost of Synvisc®.



## Will my insurance pay for Synvisc®?

Most private insurance companies cover Synvisc®. However, not all insurers and plan reimburse the same way. For example, some private plans provide unrestricted open coverage where you need only fill your prescription at your local pharmacy. For others, you or your doctor may need to file additional documentation to obtain a prior authorization for reimbursement of Synvisc® costs.

Synvisc® is being treated either as a medical device or a drug depending on the insurance company. This means most manage coverage under the major medical or supplementary health section of your insurance plan.

If you are unsure about your Synvisc® coverage, you can call the Synvisc® Reimbursement HELPLINE. Reimbursement specialists will contact your insurance company and help verify your benefits and provide options to those who don't have coverage. Additionally, they will provide answers to questions you may have about Synvisc® reimbursement.

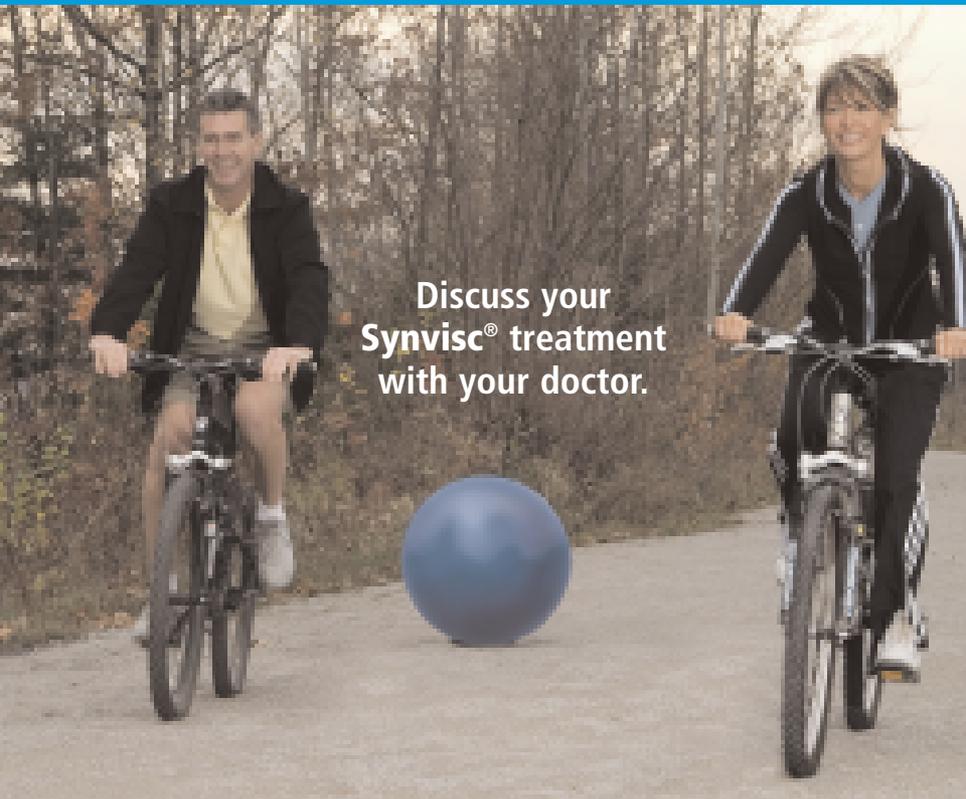
The Synvisc® Reimbursement HELPLINE is open from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm Monday through Friday. Simply call **1-866-401-8323** and a specialist will be pleased to help you.

## Where can I get Synvisc®?

After consulting with your physician, Synvisc® can be ordered through your local pharmacy or call **1-888-333-0506**, for additional ordering information.

## Can Synvisc® be sent directly to my physician's office?

Discuss that option with your physician during your consultation.



Discuss your  
**Synvisc®** treatment  
with your doctor.

**Synvisc® FACTS:**

Synvisc® can decrease or eliminate OA pain. In fact, no other treatment of its kind delivers a greater magnitude of pain relief for longer than Synvisc®. Synvisc® may be able to offer you:

- Up to 12 months of pain relief with one course of treatment.
- None of the gastrointestinal and cardiovascular issues associated with oral medications.
- Double the pain relief when added to standard treatment, such as diet, exercise, acetaminophen and NSAIDS.