

Product Information

1. What is HYALGAN[®] (sodium hyaluronate)?

HYALGAN[®] is a product based on a class of products known as hyaluronic acid, sodium hyaluronate, or hyaluronans.¹

It is approved for the treatment of pain due to osteoarthritis of the knee in patients who do not get adequate relief from simple painkillers or from exercise and physical therapy.²

2. How is HYALGAN[®] administered?

HYALGAN[®] is administered by your health care provider as an intra-articular injection into the knee joint.

3. How does HYALGAN[®] work?

The precise mechanism by which HYALGAN[®] works is unknown. The fluid (synovial fluid) in your knee helps to lubricate and cushion the joint during movement. The major component in the synovial fluid is hyaluronic acid. One of the early effects of osteoarthritis (OA) is the breakdown of this fluid, making it less effective. It is thought that HYALGAN[®] injection helps restore the synovial fluid back to a more healthy state, thereby reducing the pain of OA.^{1,3}

4. Why is my doctor recommending I receive HYALGAN[®]?

HYALGAN[®] is indicated for patients with osteoarthritis knee pain who do not obtain adequate relief from simple painkillers, (Tylenol[®] or Advil[®]), or from exercise and physical therapy.²

Ask your doctor for additional information and discuss your treatment options.

5. Is HYALGAN[®] approved for use in the U.S.?

HYALGAN[®] was the first hyaluronic acid to be approved in the United States in 1997.⁴

It has a long history of use worldwide with a very favorable safety profile, with over 30 million doses administered since launch, and has been studied in 110 clinical trials.⁴

6. What is HYALGAN[®] made from?

Hyaluronic acid is naturally present in the body and its composition is almost exactly the same in all animal species – including human. It is particularly in high amounts in joint tissues and in the fluid that fills the knee joint (synovial fluid).^{1,3} HYALGAN[®] is made from an extraction and purification of hyaluronic acid from rooster combs, where it is also found in particularly high amounts.

7. Will my insurance cover HYALGAN[®]?

Most insurance carriers and Medicare cover HYALGAN[®]. The process of obtaining reimbursement varies from plan to plan so talk with your doctor's office and your insurance provider before you begin treatment to find out if HYALGAN[®] is covered.

Treatment

8. Why are three or more injections required?

Clinical investigations with HYALGAN[®] have demonstrated that three⁵ to five⁶ injections one week apart provide significant pain relief and restoration of joint mobility. Completion of the full injection treatment course is recommended to achieve the greatest therapeutic benefit.²

9. How do I know if HYALGAN[®] is right for me?

A doctor is the best person to advise you on any course of treatment. HYALGAN[®] is approved for the treatment of pain due to osteoarthritis of the knee in patients who do not get adequate relief from simple painkillers or from exercise and physical therapy.²

10. Am I too old for HYALGAN[®] injections?

There are no specific precautions or contraindications regarding the use of HYALGAN[®] in older patients. During clinical trials, the safety profile of HYALGAN[®] was well established in older patients (greater than 50 years old).⁷

11. Can I take other medications with HYALGAN[®]?

Because HYALGAN[®] is injected directly into the joint and not administered systemically and there are no known drug interactions,⁸ you may be able to take other medications as well. It is not known to interfere with other pain relievers and anti-inflammatory drugs. The safety and effectiveness of the use of HYALGAN[®] concomitantly with other intra-articular injections, such as steroids, have not been established. You should discuss all of your current medications and vitamin supplements with your physician on a periodic basis.

12. Can I receive HYALGAN[®] in both knees?

Yes, if both knees have pain. HYALGAN[®] treatment may be given in both knees simultaneously or separately, according to your physician's recommendations. Because HYALGAN[®] is only injected locally into the knee joint and not administered systemically, it is not likely that injections into one knee will have an effect on both knees. Please consult with your physician on his/her recommendation.

13. Should I avoid strenuous activities after receiving HYALGAN[®] treatment?

It is recommended that you avoid strenuous activities such as jogging, tennis, and heavy lifting or standing on your feet for a long time for at least 48 hours after receiving an injection.²

Your doctor will advise about what level of activity is right for you, but in general, patients are able to maintain their normal daily activities after receiving HYALGAN[®] treatment.

14. How often can HYALGAN[®] be injected into my knee?

The number of courses/injections is a decision you and your doctor need to make. Your doctor may recommend three* or five HYALGAN[®] injections and repeat treatment based upon their clinical assessment and discussions with you. Studies show that retreatment with HYALGAN[®] is safe following the initial treatment period.^{2,7} Some insurance plans restrict the frequency at which you can receive additional injections. Consult your doctor's office or insurance provider to find out about coverage for any retreatments you may receive.

15. Can HYALGAN[®] be used in joints other than the knee?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has only approved HYALGAN[®] for use in the treatment of OA of the knee.²

The FDA has not approved or made an evaluation regarding the safety and effectiveness in other joints.

16. Can HYALGAN[®] alleviate the signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knee?

There is no cure for osteoarthritis. HYALGAN[®] is a treatment for the symptoms of knee pain in osteoarthritis, with long-lasting benefit.²

Benefits

17. When can I expect to experience pain relief?

Each patient's response to HYALGAN[®] may vary, depending on severity of your OA, degree of pain, and pre-existing medical conditions. In some patients, successful treatment may reduce pain within the first week after treatment begins. However, based upon clinical trials, patients may experience pain relief after their third injection of HYALGAN[®].⁶

18. Is HYALGAN[®] treatment effective in knees with advanced osteoarthritis and loss of cartilage?

Clinical studies with HYALGAN[®] have been primarily done in patients with mild to moderate OA.⁶

19. What are the benefits of receiving HYALGAN[®] treatment?

Successful treatment with HYALGAN[®] should reduce pain in an osteoarthritic knee, resulting in increased mobility and recovery of joint function.⁶

Because it is a local treatment, HYALGAN[®] should not interfere with any concomitant medicine that the patient may take. Please seek advice from your physician.

20. How long can I expect the benefits of HYALGAN[®] to last?

Each patient reacts differently to HYALGAN[®] treatment. Five injections given at weekly intervals can provide most patients with long-lasting pain relief for up to 6 months. The duration of pain relief you experience may vary.

Some patients may experience benefit with three injections given at weekly intervals.* This has been noted in published literature of patients receiving three injections who were followed for 60 days.

Safety

21. How safe is HYALGAN[®]?

Extensive safety and toxicity tests were performed on HYALGAN[®] before the first clinical trials. HYALGAN[®] has been in use since 1987 in Europe and 1997 in the U.S., with 50 million injections given worldwide since launch.⁴

In clinical trials, transient local pain or swelling occurred with some patients with injections of HYALGAN[®].^{2,6}

22. What are the side effects of HYALGAN[®]?

Because HYALGAN[®] is injected directly into the joint, some patients may feel localized discomfort after treatment.^{2,6,8} Transient pain, swelling, and effusion may occur in and around the knee, which usually go away within a short period and do not interfere with the success of the treatment. If you continue to feel discomfort or notice other problems, you should consult your physician.

23. Are there any allergies that may affect HYALGAN[®] treatment?

Consult with your doctor if you have a history of allergy, especially if you have had a reaction to intra-articular hyaluronic acid preparations or are allergic to avian proteins, feathers, and egg products. There are rare reports of patients reporting allergic reactions to HYALGAN[®] injections.²

*Some patients may experience benefits with 3 injections, 1 injection per week for 3 weeks. This has been noted in published literature.

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References:

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5. Carrabba M, Paresce E, Angelini M, Re KA, Torchiana EEM, Perbellini A. The safety and efficacy of different dose schedules of hyaluronic acid in the treatment of painful osteoarthritis of the knee with joint effusion. Eur J Rheumatol Inflamm. 1995;15:25-31.
6. Altman RD, Moskowitz R, and the HYALGAN[®] Study Group. Intraarticular sodium hyaluronate (HYALGAN[®]) in the treatment of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee: a randomized clinical trial. J Rheumatol. 1998;25:2203-2212.
7. Scali JJ. Intra-articular sodium hyaluronic acid in the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee: a long term study. Eur J Rheumatol Inflamm. 1995;15:57-62.
8. Hammesfahr JF, Knopf AB, Stitik T. Safety of intra-articular hyaluronates for pain associated with osteoarthritis of the knee. Am J Orthop. 2003;32:277-283.

Please see precautions, warnings and contradictions in the ISI (Important Safety Information) section of this website.