Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) is gaining a strong following among health professionals and the public for its ability to relieve pain and promote wellness. Many physicians are finding that patients’ need for pain medication can be greatly reduced when MSM supplements are taken at the same time. For many, MSM has allowed them to live pain-free for the first time in years. The research on MSM and its pain relieving properties is still in its infancy. The good news, however, is that MSM is an innocuous natural substance that can be used safely along with a host of pain medications.

Safety is an important point when it comes to pain relief, because many of the medications used to treat pain are toxic. NSAID pain medications alone are responsible for over 20,000 deaths and over 100,000 hospitalizations per year in the U.S. By contrast, MSM is completely safe, even in large doses. This is because MSM is a naturally occurring substance found in small amounts in produce, meat, milk, and seafood. MSM has always been a nutrient in our diet, and is a natural component of our plasma. Unfortunately, however, heat and processing destroys or greatly reduces the MSM content of food, leaving many with a suboptimal intake of this important nutrient.1

MSM provides most of its benefits by supplying the body with sulfur. Sulfur is responsible for the health promoting and pain-relieving properties of MSM. Approximately half of the sulfur in the body is found in the muscles, skin and bones. Sulfur is necessary for making collagen, the primary constituent of cartilage, skin and connective tissue.

Acid Lowering/Heartburn Relieving Effects
Pilot studies have suggested that MSM can provide extremely effective and immediate relief from excess acidity, and without side effects, unlike the prescription antacids or acid-blockers. MSM can be taken every day without disturbing any of the body’s normal functions, including acid/alkaline balance.2

Allergies
MSM has strong anti-inflammatory activity on the body which can greatly assist in reducing inflammation that is common in allergic reactions.3 Both environmental and food allergies can be reduced with MSM. Asthma and hay fever sufferers also have reported significant relief with MSM.

Arthritis
MSM has shown excellent potential in the treatment of osteoarthritis. Studies have shown MSM to be as effective as medication for pain relief in osteoarthritis, and without any of the toxicity of drug treatments.4 MSM has also been found helpful in rheumatoid arthritis.5

Preventing Breast Cancer
Research in animal studies has shown that oral MSM can protect against the onset of breast cancer.6 In both breast and colon cancer studies, MSM significantly prolonged the time of appearance of both tumors and cancers.

How to Take MSM
MSM should be taken daily. It is best to start with 1,500 mg of MSM for the first week in order to prevent the body from detoxifying too quickly, which can occur in some taking too much MSM initially. After the first week, the dose can be increased to 3-10 grams per day (3,000 to 10,000 mg). This dose can be taken as long as needed. When taking larger doses, the powdered form of MSM is more convenient and economical. To improve the taste of MSM powder, dissolve it in lemon juice and water, or in cranberry juice. Taking MSM at the same time as other supplements is also a good idea, as MSM works synergistically with all nutrients. For the best results, spread your MSM dosage equally throughout the day. MSM is safe in high doses and to date has yet to be found to interfere or interact with any medications. Many also find that adding MSM powder to their bath water helps relieve pain and aid detoxification.
For an extensive discussion of the benefits of MSM, refer to the book The Miracle of MSM: The Natural Solution for Pain (Putnam Press, 1999) by Stanley Jacob, M.D., Ronald Lawrence, M.D., Ph.D. and Martin Zucker. Stanley Jacob, M.D. is regarded as one of the pioneers in the clinical applications of MSM, and in his book, he discusses his many case histories where he has used MSM to treat pain, inflammation, asthma, osteoarthritis, autoimmune diseases, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia, tendonitis, sinusitis, shin splints, TMJ, back pain, allergies, and other conditions.