

## PETS

# Can supplement calm arthritis?

**Q. Should I give my dog a joint supplement for arthritis?**

You should consult with your veterinarian regarding the diagnosis of arthritis. There are many reasons, in addition to arthritis in a joint, for problems with walking, running, climbing stairs or jumping. Some dogs slow down as they get older because of muscle weakness, an endocrine problem or nerve disease caused by a bulging disc in the spine. Tumors may also occur, causing bone pain or reduced motion. The best way to diagnose arthritis in your dog is a combination of an orthopedic examination and a radiograph of the problem area.



Dr. Miller

Once an accurate diagnosis of osteoarthritis is made, then a variety of treatment options exist, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), weight loss, an exercise program, rehabilitative therapy and pain control medications. These options will help with arthritis discomfort more quickly than a supplement.

Joint supplements, however, can help augment these treatments in the long term. One study estimated that 25 percent of dogs in this country are on a supplement. There are a great variety of nutraceuticals on the market for dogs and people. These supplements are not legally considered medications, therefore the Food and Drug Administration does not require stringent testing to prove their usefulness or safety. There are only a few supplements that have been scientifically tested in dogs.

Glucosamine with chondroitin sulfate has been shown in studies to help alleviate signs of pain and limping in dogs after one to two months. This supplement seemed to take time to build up in the affected joints before it worked well. No harmful side effects were seen. There are a few veterinary-ap-

## SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS

The veterinarians of the Oradell Animal Hospital in Paramus will answer your pet-related questions on health and well-being. E-mail [pets@northjersey.com](mailto:pets@northjersey.com). Please include your name, address and phone number.

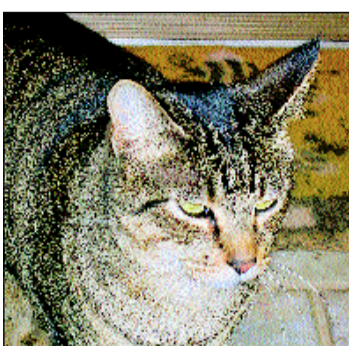
proved brands that are made by well-respected companies with good quality control. One study evaluated a variety of glucosamine containing supplements found on the shelves of nutritional and discount stores, and it found that some of the products contained vastly lower amounts of glucosamine than what was advertised on the label. So be careful where you obtain this.

Green-lipped mussel extract was evaluated in one study and found to be of questionable help. A variety of other compounds are added to joint supplements, which in theory should help, but none of the following have been rigorously tested: omega 3 fatty acids, MSM, avocado-soybean extract, methionine and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Supplements with these ingredients probably aren't going to help much, but shouldn't hurt.

— Jonathan M. Miller  
DVM, Diplomate, ACVS

This column is prepared by the veterinarians of the Oradell Animal Hospital in Paramus, one of the largest technically advanced veterinary facilities in the world. The veterinarians wish to remind readers that any suggestions or advice mentioned in the column are not a substitute for a consultation with your own veterinarian.

## ADOPT A PET



Odie, a handsome 6-month-old male tiger domestic short-hair, is available for adoption through Closter Animal Welfare Society. Odie is described by shelter workers as "a dog trapped in a cat's body." He is neutered and current on shots. Information: 201-768-0200; [clawsadopt.org](http://clawsadopt.org).



Coco, a neutered Holland lop rabbit, is one of seven rabbits available for adoption at the Bergen County Animal Shelter, 100 United Lane, Teterboro. He was brought to the shelter when his owner moved, and seems comfortable with being handled. The shelter will only adopt rabbits to owners willing to provide the animals with indoor homes. ID Number 74860. Information: 201-229-4600; [bcas.petfinder.org](http://bcas.petfinder.org).

## MOVIES

# 'The Box' is best left unopened

By DAVID GERMAIN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameron Diaz and James Marsden have a terrible moral dilemma in Richard Kelly's "The Box": Press a button on a mysterious container, they'll get \$1 million, and someone they don't know will die.

What button, on whose box, did Kelly push to get the money to make this awful, preposterous thriller?

If Hollywood were a "three strikes, you're out" kind of place, Kelly would be flirting with permanent banishment. His first film, cult hit "Donnie Darko," was an intriguing foul ball, muddled and pretentious but showing signs of a strong talent in search of his voice.

His second, "Southland Tales," was a disaster, an unintelligible heap of bombast that was distressing to watch, the way it just refused to end. Life's too short, you know?

While not as long and overblown as "Southland Tales," this third try is just as bad in its way. And how it treats Frank Langella, who finally got some cinematic respect with his Academy Award nomination for last year's "Frost/Nixon," is shameful.

"The Box" is like a magician's prop: It gives the illusion that it's full of stuff — ideas, portents, clues, meaning — when actually, it's as empty as the heroines' heads in



**THE BOX**  
115 minutes, PG-13

(for thematic elements, violence and disturbing images)

Directed and written by Richard Kelly. Produced by Kelly, Dan Lin, Kelly McKittrick and Sean McKittrick. Photographed by Steven Poster. Edited by Sam Bauer. Music by Win Butler, Regine Chasagne and Owen Pallett.

With Cameron Diaz, James Marsden and Frank Langella.

Cameron Diaz as Norma Lewis in "The Box."

Diaz's "Charlie's Angels" flicks.

Writer-director Kelly adapted this mess from Richard Matheson's short story "Button, Button," previously the basis for an episode of the 1980s TV revival of "The Twilight Zone."

With its O. Henry-style gotcha ending, Matheson's story is perfect for "The Twilight Zone." But when Kelly reaches that surprise climax from the short story, sadly he's just getting started.

Diaz and Marsden play Norma and Arthur Lewis, a Virginia couple living a decent life with their

young son in 1976.

Just as some financial setbacks hit the family, ominous stranger Arlington Steward (Langella, stuck with a horrible facial disfigurement from a lightning strike), turns up with the box, the button and the deal.

The movie then wallows through superficial soul-searching and sermonizing as the Lewises make their choice, graduating from a "Twilight Zone" episode to an installment of "The X-Files" in its post-Mulder death throes, when the show turned to rot.

ENTERTAINMENT  
Every day in Better Living