

DESCRIPTION

Title of Invention: COMPOSITION FOR PREVENTING OR TREATING
OSTEOARTHRITIS

5 Technical Field
 [0001]

 The present invention relates to a composition for
preventing or treating osteoarthritis.

Background Art

10 [0002]

 Osteoarthritis (OA) is a joint disease associated with
chronic arthritis, and is a disease in which degeneration of
articular components causes cartilage destruction and
proliferative change of bone and cartilage. In particular, the
15 number of knee osteoarthritis patients diagnosed through X-ray
examination is approximately 25 million, and, of these patients,
an estimated eight million or more experience pain.

 [0003]

 In spite of these circumstances, only symptomatic
20 treatments such as painkillers and direct intra-articular
injection of hyaluronic acid are currently available for
osteoarthritis. Arresting the development of osteoarthritis is
virtually impossible. When the symptoms thereof become severe,
surgery is the only method of treatment. Under such circumstances,
25 there is a strong need for an effective therapeutic agent or
therapeutic method.

Citation List

Patent Literature

 [0004]

30 Patent Literature 1: JP2007-262103A

Patent Literature 2: JP2009-274955A

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

 [0005]

35 An object of the present invention is to provide a

means for preventing or treating osteoarthritis.

Solution to Problem

[0006]

The present inventors unexpectedly discovered that
5 high-molecular-weight proteoglycans are effective for preventing
or treating osteoarthritis. The inventors have achieved the
present invention with further improvements based on this finding.
[0007]

Specifically, the present invention encompasses the
10 inventions in the following items.

Item 1. A composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis,
comprising a fish cartilage water extract containing
proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000.

Item 2. The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis
15 according to Item 1, comprising a fish cartilage water extract
containing proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less
than 5,000,000.

Item 3. The composition according to Item 1 or 2, wherein the
amount of uronic acids derived from the proteoglycans having
20 molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 accounts for at
least 10 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the fish
cartilage water extract.

Item 4. The composition according to any one of Items 1 to 3,
wherein the amount of uronic acids derived from the proteoglycans
25 having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 accounts for
at least 7 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the fish
cartilage water extract.

Item 5. The composition according to any one of Items 1 to 4,
wherein the fish cartilage water extract is a hot-water extract
30 of fish cartilage.

Item 6. The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis
according to any one of Items 1 to 5, wherein the fish cartilage
is salmon cartilage or trout cartilage.

35 Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0008]

The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis according to the present invention can prevent or treat osteoarthritis through oral intake.

5 Brief Description of Drawings

[0009]

Fig. 1 is a photograph of a frozen salmon nasal cartilage block. The lump disposed in the center of the plastic container is the frozen salmon nasal cartilage block.

10 Fig. 2 shows a uronic acid amount chromatogram and a 280-nm protein amount chromatogram of a fish cartilage water extract (freeze-dried product: Sample No. 1) containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans.

Fig. 3 shows a uronic acid amount chromatogram and a 15 280-nm protein amount chromatogram of a commercially available proteoglycan product.

Fig. 4 shows an overview of the schedule for administering test samples to osteoarthritis model mice.

Fig. 5 shows Safranin O stained images of knee joints 20 of osteoarthritis model mice to which test samples were administered.

Fig. 6a is a graph showing the analysis results of a "Safranin O" assay by the modified Mankin score in the osteoarthritis model mice to which the test samples were orally 25 administered.

Fig. 6b is a graph showing the analysis results of a "Chondrocyte" (chondrocyte count) assay by the modified Mankin score in the osteoarthritis model mice to which the test samples were orally administered.

30 Fig. 6c is a graph showing the analysis results of a "Structure" (chondrocyte surface structure) assay by the modified Mankin score in the osteoarthritis model mice to which the test samples were orally administered.

Fig. 6d is a graph showing the analysis results of the 35 sum of the scores of the "Safranin O," "Chondrocyte" (chondrocyte

count), and "Structure" (chondrocyte surface structure) by the modified Mankin score in the osteoarthritis model mice to which the test samples were orally administered.

Description of Embodiments

5 [0010]

The present invention is described in more detail below.

[0011]

Proteoglycans are compounds containing glycosaminoglycans (mucopolysaccharides) linked to proteins.

10 Glycosaminoglycans are acidic saccharides comprising repeating disaccharide units, and examples include chondroitin sulfate, dermatan sulfate, and heparan sulfate. In the repeating disaccharide units of these acidic saccharide components, one of the saccharides is an amino sugar, and the other is a uronic acid.
15 Accordingly, the detection of proteoglycans can be performed by using the carbazole-sulfuric acid method, which is a known method for detecting uronic acids.

[0012]

Further, compounds in which glycosaminoglycans are
20 linked in a comb-like structure to proteins are referred to as proteoglycan monomers (the proteins in proteoglycan monomers are called core proteins). In particular, in a living body, such proteoglycan monomers are considered to bind to hyaluronic acids via link proteins to form aggregates. The aggregates are also
25 called proteoglycan aggregates. The term "proteoglycan" used in this specification encompasses proteoglycan monomers and proteoglycan aggregates. Hyaluronic acid is a type of glycosaminoglycan.

[0013]

30 The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis according to the present invention comprises a fish cartilage water extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans.

[0014]

35 The fish cartilage water extract contained in the

composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis according to the present invention contains high-molecular-weight proteoglycans. The term "high-molecular-weight proteoglycans" used herein specifically refers to proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000, preferably molecular weights of not less than 2,500,000, not less than 3,000,000, not less than 4,000,000, not less than 5,000,000, not less than 6,000,000, not less than 7,000,000, not less than 8,000,000, not less than 9,000,000, not less than 10,000,000, not less than 11,000,000, not less than 12,000,000, not less than 13,00,000, not less than 14,000,000, not less than 15,000,000, not less than 16,000,000, not less than 17,000,000, not less than 18,000,000, not less than 19,000,000, or not less than 20,000,000. A greater molecular weight is preferable. Proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 are particularly preferable. The existence of proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than a specific value as described above can be confirmed by subjecting the fish cartilage water extract to gel filtration chromatography under the following conditions, determining the amount of uronic acids (reflecting the amount of proteoglycans) in each fraction by using the carbazole-sulfuric acid method, and creating a chromatogram based on the determined uronic acid amount. This chromatogram based on the uronic acid amount may be hereinafter referred to as a "uronic acid amount chromatogram." Further, a chromatogram may also be created based on absorbance by measuring the absorbance of each fraction at 280 nm, and determining the relative protein amount based on the absorbance measurement results (i.e., the measured value is assumed to be a value that reflects the protein amount). This chromatogram may be hereinafter referred to as a "280 nm protein amount chromatogram."

Gel Filtration Chromatography Conditions

Column: Sepharose CL-2B filled column (1-cm dia. × 50 cm column filled with Sepharose CL-2B as a carrier. Sepharose CL-2B has a

dextran fractionation range of 100 to 20,000 kDa and is available from GE Healthcare and other companies. Sepharose CL-2B is a 2% crosslinked agarose with a particle size of 60 to 200 μm

(measured by the laser diffraction scattering method), and is

5 registered under CAS registry No. 65099-79-8.)

Buffer: 0.1 M phosphate buffer (pH 7.1, containing 0.2 M NaCl)

Amount of applied sample: 4 mg of fish cartilage water extract (on a dry mass basis) (dissolved in 1 mL of buffer for use)

Flow rate: 0.15 mL/min

10 Amount of fraction: 1 mL/tube

Molecular weight calibration curve: Various dextran molecular weight markers described below are subjected to gel filtration chromatography under the same conditions as described above.

Absorbance (which reflects the dextran amount) of each fraction

15 is measured by the phenol-sulfuric acid method, which is a well-known method for detecting saccharide, and the fraction in which each marker is eluted is determined to prepare a calibration curve reflecting the molecular weight of the components contained in each fraction in the gel filtration chromatography under the above conditions. The term "fraction in which each marker is eluted" refers to a fraction in which each marker is eluted most, i.e., a fraction corresponding to the peak maximum in a chromatogram reflecting the dextran amount when each dextran molecular weight marker is subjected to gel filtration.

25 [0015]

Dextran Molecular Weight Markers

Dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* (mol wt 5,000,000 - 40,000,000) (Sigma) ... for measuring the void volume of the column, 20,000 kDa

30 Dextran Standard 1,400,000 (Sigma) ... 1,400 kDa

Dextran Standard 670,000 (Sigma) ... 670 kDa

Dextran Standard 410,000 (Sigma) ... 410 kDa

Dextran Standard 270,000 (Sigma) ... 270 kDa

The dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* is used as a marker

35 after being subjected to a pretreatment to remove low-molecular-

weight dextran contained in the marker. The pretreatment is performed by eluting dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* under the conditions described above in "Gel Filtration Chromatography Conditions" to collect molecules having a molecular weight of not less than 20,000 kDa, and freeze-drying. More specifically, a chromatogram reflecting the dextran amount is prepared by measuring absorbance of each fraction by the phenol-sulfuric acid method, and the fraction corresponding to the first peak in the chromatogram is collected and freeze-dried (it is believed that molecules having a molecular weight of not less than 20,000 kDa are thereby collected and freeze-dried). This lyophilizate is actually used as a marker (for measuring the void volume of the column).

[0016]

Measurement of absorbance to obtain a chromatogram reflecting the dextran amount is performed according to the method described in Hodge, J.E. and Hofreiter, B.T., Methods in Carbohydrate Chemistry, 1, 338 (1962) (the phenol-sulfuric acid method). More specifically, the measurement is carried out as follows.

[1] 500 μ L of an aqueous solution of the sample is placed in a 105 $\times$ 15 mm test tube.

[2] 500 μ L of a phenol reagent (5 v/v% aqueous phenol solution) is added thereto, and the mixture is stirred.

[3] 2.5 mL of concentrated sulfuric acid is added thereto, and the mixture is immediately stirred vigorously for 10 seconds.

[4] The mixture is left to stand for 20 minutes or more at room temperature.

[5] The absorbance at 490 nm is measured with a spectrophotometer.

[0017]

The carbazole-sulfuric acid method refers to a well-known method comprising adding a carbazole solution, which is a dye for staining uronic acids (e.g., glucuronic acid (Glc A) and iduronic acid), to a measurement specimen, and measuring absorbance by using a spectrophotometer to determine uronic acid

amount based on the absorbance. A calibration curve is prepared by using a glucuronic acid standard solution having a specific concentration, and the amount of glucuronic acid in the specimen is determined. More specifically, the carbazole-sulfuric acid method is performed in the following manner. 2.5 ml of a reagent obtained by dissolving 0.95 g of sodium borate decahydrate in 100 ml of concentrated sulfuric acid is placed in a test tube and ice-cooled. 0.5 ml of a test sample (preferably containing 2 to 20 μ g of uronic acid) is gently layered thereon, and stirred well under ice-cooling so as to keep the resulting mixture lower than room temperature. After covering the test tube with a glass ball, heating is performed in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes, followed by cooling with water to room temperature. A reagent obtained by dissolving 125 mg of carbazole in 100 ml of anhydrous methyl alcohol is added in an amount of 0.1 ml thereto and mixed. The mixture is further heated in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. Thereafter, the mixture is water-cooled to room temperature, and the absorbance at 530 nm is measured. As a blank, 0.5 ml of distilled water is used. Simultaneously, a calibration curve is prepared by using glucuronic acid. (The carbazole-sulfuric acid method in the Examples below is performed in the same manner as above.)

[0018]

On a dry mass basis, at least 10 mass% of the uronic acids (determined by the carbazole-sulfuric acid method) contained in the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention are preferably derived from proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000. In other words, the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention is preferably such that the amount of uronic acids contained in proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 accounts for at least 10 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the extract, on a dry mass basis. The amount of uronic acids derived from proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 more preferably accounts for not less than 15

mass%, not less than 20 mass%, not less than 25 mass%, not less than 30 mass%, not less than 35 mass%, not less than 40 mass%, not less than 45 mass%, not less than 50 mass%, or not less than 55 mass%. A greater mass% is more desirable.

5 [0019]

Further, the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention is preferably such that the amount of uronic acids contained in proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 2,500,000 accounts for at least 10 mass% of the total
10 uronic acid content of the extract, on a dry mass basis. The amount of uronic acids derived from proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 2,500,000 more preferably accounts for not less than 15 mass%, not less than 20 mass%, not less than 25 mass%, not less than 30 mass%, not less than 35
15 mass%, not less than 40 mass%, not less than 45 mass%, not less than 50 mass%, not less than 55 mass%, or not less than 60 mass%. A greater mass% is more desirable.

[0020]

Further, the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention is preferably such that the amount of uronic acids contained in proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 accounts for at least 10 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the extract, on a dry mass basis. The amount of uronic acids derived from proteoglycans having
25 molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 more preferably accounts for not less than 10 mass%, not less than 13 mass%, not less than 16 mass%, not less than 20 mass%, not less than 24 mass%, not less than 27 mass%, not less than 30 mass%, not less than 34 mass%, or not less than 37 mass%. A greater mass% is more
30 desirable.

[0021]

The proportion of the uronic acid amount of proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than a specific value (expressed as X hereinbelow) relative to the total
35 uronic acid content of the extract can be determined from the

peak area in the above-mentioned uronic acid amount chromatogram. More specifically, the proportion can be determined by calculating the proportion of the area of uronic acids having a molecular weight of not less than X relative to the entire peak area in the uronic acid amount chromatogram. Even more specifically, the proportion can be determined in the following manner. On a uronic acid amount chromatogram in which uronic acid amount is plotted on the ordinate versus fraction No. on the abscissa, a vertical line is drawn so that the vertical line passes through the fraction containing the proteoglycan having a molecular weight of X. Of the two peak portions divided by the vertical line, the proportion of the area of the peak portion containing proteoglycans having greater molecular weights relative to the entire peak area is calculated.

15 [0022]

The uronic acids contained in the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention may include those contained in sugar chains cleaved from proteoglycans as well as those contained in proteoglycans.

20 [0023]

Further, the uronic acid content (measured by the carbazole-sulfuric acid method) of the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention is, on a dry mass basis, preferably not less than 5 mass% of the extract, more preferably not less than 7.5 mass%, even more preferably not less than 10 mass%, still more preferably not less than 12.5 mass%, still even more preferably not less than 15 mass%, and particularly preferably not less than 17.5 mass%. When the uronic acid amount or content is expressed in the present specification (in particular, in figures and tables), the term "GlcA," for example, which is an abbreviation for glucuronic acid, may be used and indicated as "GlcA (μ g)." Most of the glycosaminoglycans of proteoglycans contained in the fish cartilage water extract are considered to be chondroitin sulfate. It is known that an approximate amount of chondroitin sulfate can be obtained by

5 multiplying the uronic acid amount by a conversion factor of 2.593. Accordingly, an approximate amount of proteoglycans contained in the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention can be calculated by multiplying the uronic acid amount by a conversion factor of 2.593.

[0024]

10 The fish cartilage water extract of the present invention is extracted from fish cartilage (cartilage of fishes). The type of fish is preferably *Oncorhynchus* (*Salmonidae*), including trout (humpback salmon, cherry salmon, satsukimasu salmon, etc.), salmon (chum salmon, sockeye salmon, silver salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead, etc.), shark, and cod. Salmon and trout are particularly preferable. The cartilage to be used is not particularly limited; however, head cartilage, in particular
15 nasal cartilage, is preferable. Moreover, since fish (in particular, salmon and trout) heads are usually discarded when fish are processed into food products, the cost of fish heads is low, and a large amount of fish heads can be stably supplied, which is another advantage.

20 [0025]

The extraction is performed using water. Fish cartilage obtained from a biological sample may be directly subjected to extraction, or after being pulverized (more specifically, fragmented or powdered). As described below, fish
25 cartilage may be defatted using an organic solvent such as ethanol before the extraction. As such, proteoglycans (including high-molecular-weight proteoglycans) can be extracted using water. Alternatively, water extraction may be performed while heating water or by using hot or boiling water, whereby a fish cartilage water extract with a higher effect can be efficiently obtained.

30 [0026]

As described above, as fish cartilage, cartilage obtained from a biological sample can be directly subjected to extraction. However, the fish cartilage is preferably kept frozen
35 until subjected to extraction. The freezing method is not

particularly limited, and any known freezing method can be used. For example, a method of storing fish cartilage in a freezer at about -20 to -80°C for about 24 to 72 hours can be used. Defatted fish cartilage (i.e., fish cartilage from which lipids are removed) may also be used. The use of defatted fish cartilage is advantageous in that a highly purified fish cartilage water extract that contains fewer lipids can be obtained. Examples of the defatting method include the method for obtaining "defatted fish cartilage" described below.

10 [0027]

Small fish cartilage pieces are obtained by fragmenting fish cartilage into small pieces. The fragmentation may be performed by using a known method. For example, fish cartilage (preferably frozen fish cartilage) may be fragmented into small pieces by using a known device, such as a blender or a mill. The fragmenting operation is preferably performed at a low temperature. For example, the fragmentation is preferably performed at a temperature at which the fragmented fish cartilage can be kept frozen. More specifically, the fragmentation is preferably performed at a temperature of 0°C or lower.

20 [0028]

Further, in terms of extraction efficiency, the small fish cartilage pieces are preferably frozen small pieces of fish cartilage (small frozen fish cartilage pieces). The small frozen fish cartilage pieces can be obtained by (i) freezing fish cartilage, and then fragmenting the frozen fish cartilage into small pieces, or by (ii) fragmenting fish cartilage into small pieces, and then freezing the small fish cartilage pieces. The small frozen fish cartilage pieces obtained by method (i) are more preferable. The freezing method is not particularly limited, and any known freezing method can be used. For example, a method of storing fish cartilage in a freezer at about -20 to -80°C for about 24 to 72 hours can be used.

30 [0029]

35 The small fish cartilage pieces or small frozen fish

cartilage pieces preferably weigh about 0.001 to 0.5 g, more preferably about 0.005 to 0.3 g, and even more preferably about 0.01 to 0.1 g per piece. The fragmenting operation is preferably performed in a manner enabling the production of such small
5 pieces (the conditions for obtaining such small pieces can be easily obtained by appropriately selecting and adjusting the device to be used).

[0030]

Fish cartilage powder is obtained by pulverizing fish
10 cartilage into powder (powdered fish cartilage). The pulverization may be performed by using a known method. For example, the pulverization of fish cartilage (preferably frozen fish cartilage) may be performed by using a known device, such as a blender or a mill. The pulverization is preferably performed at
15 a low temperature (e.g., not more than 0°C).

[0031]

Further, in terms of extraction efficiency, it is preferable to use frozen powder of fish cartilage (frozen fish cartilage powder). Frozen fish cartilage powder can be obtained
20 by (i') freezing fish cartilage, and then pulverizing the frozen fish cartilage into powder, or by (ii') pulverizing fish cartilage into powder, and then freezing the powder. The frozen fish cartilage powder obtained by method (i') is more preferable. The freezing method is not particularly limited, and any known
25 freezing method can be used. For example, a method of storing fish cartilage in a freezer at about -20 to -80°C for about 24 to 72 hours can be used.

[0032]

The term "powder" refers to a piece smaller than what
30 is referred to by the term "small pieces"; however, these terms are not necessarily distinguished clearly. Among the products resulting from pulverization of fish cartilage, relatively large pieces are referred to as "small pieces," and relatively small pieces are referred to as "powder." Therefore, although there is
35 no particular limitation, the powder preferably contains

particles having a particle size of about 10 to 1,000 μm , preferably about 50 to 500 μm , more preferably about 100 to 200 μm (measured by a laser diffraction and scattering method). The powder preferably contains particles having the above particle size in a large proportion (e.g., not less than 50 mass%, preferably not less than 70 mass%).

[0033]

As the small fish cartilage pieces or fish cartilage powder, defatted fish cartilage (i.e., fish cartilage pieces or fish cartilage powder from which lipids are removed) may also be used. In other words, defatted small fish cartilage pieces or defatted fish cartilage powder may also be used. By using defatted fish cartilage, a highly purified fish cartilage water extract that contains fewer lipids can be obtained. The defatted small fish cartilage pieces or defatted fish cartilage powder can be obtained by (α) pulverizing defatted fish cartilage into small pieces or powder, or (β) pulverizing fish cartilage into small pieces or powder, and then defatting the small pieces or powder.

[0034]

The defatting may be performed by a known method. For example, fish cartilage defatting step (α) above may be performed by placing fish cartilage under running water (e.g., tap water) for about 1 to 24 hours. Preparation of fish cartilage can be performed using a known method, such as a method comprising immersing fish tissues (preferably a fish head) in water for about 1 to 24 hours to swell the tissues, and removing tissues other than cartilage (preferably nasal cartilage), and a method comprising thawing a frozen salmon head, then immediately separating the nasal cartilage, and placing the nasal cartilage under running water for about 1 to 24 hours, thereby washing and defatting the cartilage. When the cartilage has residual flesh, the flesh is preferably removed with tweezers or the like. At this point, since the fish cartilage has not been pulverized into small pieces or powder, little proteoglycan is likely to be extracted, even if the cartilage is placed under running water.

Further, as in step (β) below, lipids can also be removed by extraction using an organic solvent.

[0035]

The step (β) of defatting the small fish cartilage
5 pieces or fish cartilage powder may be performed, for example, by
a method comprising extracting and removing lipids using an
organic solvent. Examples of the organic solvent include ethanol,
hexane, and acetone. More specifically, as step (β), a method
disclosed in JP2009-173702A can be preferably used. More
10 specifically, for example, defatted fish cartilage powder, which
is obtained by a method including the following steps A to E, can
be preferably used in the present invention (JP2009-173702A also
discloses more detailed conditions).

A. Frozen aquatic animal tissues (fish tissues) are crushed, and
15 treated at 0 to 20°C, pH of 4.8 to 7 after adding water.

B. A solid-liquid mixture obtained by step A is centrifuged to
remove the uppermost lipid layer and the intermediate aqueous
layer to collect a precipitate.

C. The precipitate is dried and pulverized into a fine powder.

20 D. A solvent, namely hexane, acetone, or ethanol, is added to the
obtained dried fine powder to extract and remove residual lipids.

E. The solvent is removed.

[0036]

It is more preferable to use frozen and defatted small
25 fish cartilage pieces or fish cartilage powder (frozen, defatted
small fish cartilage pieces or frozen, defatted fish cartilage
powder). These can be obtained, for example, by freezing defatted
fish cartilage, and pulverizing the frozen fish cartilage into
small pieces or powder.

30 [0037]

These defatting methods can be applied not only to
small fish cartilage pieces or fish cartilage powder, but also to
cartilage obtained from a biological sample.

[0038]

35 The fish cartilage (including small fish cartilage

pieces and fish cartilage powder, which hereinafter may be referred to collectively as "fine fish cartilage") is subjected to water extraction. Examples of water used for water extraction (which hereinafter may be referred to as "extraction water") include Milli-Q water, distilled water, deionized water, purified water, and tap water. Further, the pH of the extraction water is typically about 5.5 to 8.0, preferably about 6.0 to 7.5, more preferably about 6.5 to 7.5. It is not preferable to dissolve substances that greatly change the pH, such as acids, alkalis, and bases. If an acid compound such as an organic acid or an inorganic acid, or an alkali compound such as sodium hydroxide, is added to the extraction water, high-molecular-weight proteoglycans (in particular, high-molecular-weight proteoglycans having molecular weights of higher than 10,000,000) are reduced or disappear. Accordingly, no addition of acid compounds or alkali compounds is preferable. Although a restrictive interpretation is not desired, this presumably occurs because acid compounds and alkali compounds cause degradation of proteoglycan aggregates during extraction.

[0039]

The water extract can be obtained, for example, by immersing fish cartilage in water for an appropriate period of time (e.g., not less than 30 minutes, preferably about 30 minutes to 24 hours, more preferably about 1 to 12 hours, even more preferably about 2 to 6 hours, and still more preferably about 3 to 4 hours). The amount of water is not particularly limited; for example, the water amount is a sufficient amount for completely immersing all of the small fish cartilage pieces or fish cartilage powder subjected to extraction. The water extraction may be performed while allowing to stand or while stirring. Stirring is preferable. The water temperature during the extraction is not particularly limited; however, the temperature is preferably not less than 50°C, and more preferably not less than 70°C. To ensure this temperature range, the water may be heated during the extraction or before the extraction. The

heating temperature (i.e., the temperature of the water used) is preferably about 50 to 100°C, more preferably about 70 to 100°C, even more preferably about 80 to 100°C, still more preferably about 90 to 100°C. The heating may be performed under an
5 increased pressure. Since heating may cause degradation of high-molecular-weight proteoglycans, the heated extraction water may be replaced during the extraction. The extraction water may be replaced, for example, every 15 minutes to 4 hours, preferably every 30 minutes to 2 hours, or approximately every 1 hour. A
10 preferable embodiment of water extraction is, for example, a method comprising adding water (preferably heated water) to fish cartilage in an amount sufficient to completely immerse the total amount of fish cartilage, and allowing it to stand or stirring it for 3 to 4 hours while heating. Another preferable embodiment is
15 a method comprising repeating the following process four times: adding water (preferably heated water) to fish cartilage in an amount sufficient to completely immerse the total amount of fish cartilage, allowing it to stand for an hour while heating, and collecting the resulting water (in this case, the water
20 extraction is performed for 4 hours in total).
[0040]

After the water extraction, the liquid portion is collected to obtain a fish cartilage water extract. The collection of the liquid portion can be performed, for example,
25 by collecting the supernatant through a centrifugation treatment (e.g., centrifugation at 5000 rpm, 4°C, for 20 minutes) or a continuous centrifugation treatment. The liquid (supernatant) may be used unmodified as the fish cartilage water extract of the present invention, or may be further purified by a known method
30 (e.g., defatting). Alternatively, the liquid may be concentrated by distillation under reduced pressure or the like. It is also possible to dry or powder the liquid according to the freeze-drying method or the spray-drying method.
[0041]

35 For example, the thus-obtained fish cartilage water

extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans is preferably used as a composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis.

[0042]

5 The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis according to the present invention comprises a fish cartilage water extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans. The composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis of the present invention is preferably used in the
10 pharmaceutical and food fields.

[0043]

 When the composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis according to the present invention is used in the pharmaceutical field, the composition (hereinafter, sometimes
15 referred to as the "pharmaceutical composition of the present invention") may consist only of a fish cartilage water extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans, or may contain other components. The pharmaceutical composition of the present invention may contain pharmaceutically acceptable bases, carriers,
20 and additives (e.g., excipients, binders, disintegrators, lubricants, solvents, sweeteners, colorants, corrigents, odor-masking agents, surfactants, moisturizers, preservatives, pH adjusters, and thickeners). Such bases, carriers, additives, etc., are specifically described, for example, in Japanese
25 Pharmaceutical Excipients Directory 2007 (Yakuji Nippo Limited), and those mentioned therein, for example, may be used. The composition of the present invention can be formed into a preparation form, such as tablets, coated tablets, powders, granules, fine granules, capsules, pills, liquids, suspensions,
30 emulsions, jellies, chewables, or soft tablets, by using a known method.

[0044]

 The amount of the high-molecular-weight proteoglycan-containing fish cartilage water extract in the pharmaceutical
35 composition of the present invention is not particularly limited

as long as effects of preventing or treating osteoarthritis are provided. The amount can be suitably set according to the preferred daily intake amount of the fish cartilage water extract. The amount is preferably 0.0005 to 100 mass%, more preferably
5 0.005 to 90 mass%, and even more preferably 0.05 to 80 mass%.
[0045]

The subject to whom the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention is to be administered is an osteoarthritis patient. In particular, a gonarthrosis patient is preferable.
10 The severity of illness of the patient is not particularly limited, and the composition can be administered to early-stage patients, intermediate-stage patients, and late-stage patients. It is also possible to preventatively use the composition for people having a high risk of developing osteoarthritis, such as
15 elderly people.
[0046]

The timing of administering the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention is not particularly limited, and can be appropriately selected by taking into consideration,
20 for example, the dosage form, patient's age, severity of patient's symptoms, etc. The mode of administration is preferably oral administration. When the target subject is a patient to whom the pharmaceutical composition is hard to administer via an oral route, such as a patient with dysphagia, the composition may be
25 fed directly to the stomach through a gastrostomy tube.
[0047]

The dosage of the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention can be suitably selected according to the patient's age, severity of patient's symptoms, and other
30 conditions. The amount of high-molecular-weight proteoglycans in the pharmaceutical composition is preferably set so that the daily intake amount per adult is within the range of 1 to 1,000 mg, and more preferably 10 to 300 mg. The pharmaceutical composition can be administered once per day, or administered in
35 separate doses several times (preferably, 2 to 3 times) per day.

[0048]

When the composition for preventing osteoarthritis of the present invention is used as a food additive, the composition (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "food additive of the present invention") may consist only of a fish cartilage water extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans, or may comprise the fish cartilage water extract and other components such as food-hygienically acceptable bases, carriers, additives, and other components and materials that can be used as food additives. Examples of the forms of such food additives include, but are not limited to, liquids, powders, flakes, granules, and pastes. Specific examples of food additives include seasonings (e.g., soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, and dressing), flakes (*furikake* [seasoning mix for sprinkling over cooked rice]), *yakiniku* [Korean-style barbecue] sauce, spices, and paste-like roux (e.g., paste-like curry roux). These food additives can be appropriately prepared according to known methods. The amount of the high-molecular-weight proteoglycan-containing fish cartilage water extract in the food additive of the present invention is not particularly limited, as long as effects of preventing or treating osteoarthritis are provided. The amount is preferably 0.0005 to 100 mass%, more preferably 0.005 to 90 mass%, and even more preferably 0.05 to 80 mass%.

[0049]

Eating a food comprising such a food additive results in intake of the food additive of the present invention. The food additive of the present invention may be added to a food while the food is cooked or produced, or may be added immediately before or while the cooked food is eaten. Oral intake of the food additive in this manner provides an osteoarthritis-preventive effect. Various conditions, such as the subject receiving the food additive of the present invention, and the intake amount of high-molecular-weight proteoglycans contained in the food additive, are not particularly limited, but are preferably, for example, the same as those described above for the pharmaceutical

composition of the present invention.

[0050]

When the composition for preventing osteoarthritis of the present invention is used as a food or beverage, the composition (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "food or beverage of the present invention") comprises the fish cartilage water extract and other components, such as food-hygienically acceptable bases, carriers, additives, and other ingredients and materials that can be used for foods. Examples includes foods and beverages that comprise a fish cartilage water extract containing high-molecular-weight proteoglycans, such as processed foods, beverages, health foods (e.g., foods with nutrient function claims and foods for specified health uses), supplements, medical foods (e.g., hospital diets, sick diets, and nursing-care foods), and the like. Examples further include those produced by forming the high-molecular-weight proteoglycan-containing fish cartilage water extract into a powder by freeze-drying or spray-drying, and incorporating the powder into various beverages and foods, such as beverages (e.g., juices), confectionaries (e.g., gums, gummy candies, chocolates, biscuits, cookies, *okaki* (rice crackers), *sembei* (rice crackers), rice crackers, puddings, jellies, and *annin tofu* (almond jelly)), breads, soups (including powdered soups), and processed foods.

[0051]

When the food or beverage of the present invention is prepared as health foods (e.g., food with nutrient function claims, and food for specified health use) or supplements, preferable forms thereof are granules, capsules, pills (including, for example, chewable tablets), and beverages (drink preparations) in view of ease of continuous intake. Among these, in terms of ease of intake, forms such as capsules, tablets, and pills are preferable, but are not particularly limited thereto. The food or beverage of the present invention in the form of granules, capsules, pills, or the like, can be appropriately prepared according to known methods using pharmaceutically and/or

food-hygienically acceptable carriers or the like. When the food or beverage of the present invention is formed into other forms, known methods may also be used.

[0052]

5 The amount of proteoglycan-containing fish cartilage water extract in the food or beverage of the present invention is not particularly limited as long as an effect of preventing osteoarthritis is provided. The amount is preferably 0.0005 to 100 mass%, more preferably 0.005 to 90 mass%, and still more
10 preferably 0.05 to 80 mass%.

[0053]

 The food or beverage of the present invention is preferably used for preventing osteoarthritis. Various conditions, such as the subject receiving the food or beverage of the present
15 invention, and the intake amount of high-molecular-weight proteoglycans contained in the food or beverage, are not particularly limited, but are preferably the same as, for example, those described above for the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention.

20 [0054]

 Hospital diets are meals provided to hospitalized people. Sick diets are meals for the sick. Nursing-care foods are meals for people receiving care. The food or beverage of the present invention is particularly preferably used as hospital
25 diets, sick diets, or nursing-care foods that are for patients hospitalized due to osteoarthritis, patients recuperating therefrom at home, or patients receiving nursing care. People having a high risk of developing osteoarthritis, such as elderly people, may also preventatively ingest the food or beverage.

30 [0055]

 The present invention further provides a method for preventing or treating osteoarthritis, comprising orally administering or ingesting the composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis of the present invention to
35 osteoarthritis patients, or persons having a high risk of

developing osteoarthritis. Specifically, these methods can be performed through oral administration or oral intake of the composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis of the present invention. In this method, each of the conditions, such as oral administration and intake amount, are as described above.

Examples

[0056]

The present invention is more specifically described below. However, the present invention is not limited to the following examples.

Preparation of Proteoglycans

A proteoglycan-containing water extract was obtained from salmon nasal cartilage in the following manner. Salmon nasal cartilage was obtained by separating nasal cartilage immediately after thawing a frozen salmon head, placing the nasal cartilage under running water for 6 hours to wash and defat the nasal cartilage, removing pieces of flesh and the like with tweezers, and washing the nasal cartilage with water by hand.

[0057]

The salmon nasal cartilage was stored and frozen in a freezer, and the frozen nasal cartilage was used as a "frozen salmon nasal cartilage block." Fig. 1 is a photograph of the frozen salmon nasal cartilage block. The frozen salmon nasal cartilage block had a size of about 2.5 × 1.5 cm to about 4.5 × 2 cm, and a weight of about 1.71 g to about 6.91 g (the average weight of 7 blocks was 3.701 g); however, the size and weight depend on the size of the salmon head used.

[0058]

Proteoglycans were extracted by heating a frozen salmon nasal cartilage block at 100°C. Specifically, the extraction was performed in the following manner. 2,500 mL of distilled water was added to a total of about 1,000 g of the frozen salmon nasal cartilage blocks, and the resulting mixture was heated at 100°C for 3 hours. The mixture was centrifuged with a centrifugal separator at 8,000 rpm at 4°C for 30 minutes to remove insoluble

matter (residue) and collect the supernatant. The collected supernatant was suction-filtered using filter paper. The obtained filtrate was freeze-dried to obtain a proteoglycan-containing lyophilizate. The lyophilizate was crushed with a cutter mill, pulverized into powder, and subjected to the following analysis. About 65 g of powder was obtained. The proteoglycan-containing lyophilized powder is referred to as "Sample No. 1."

[0059]

Analysis of Molecular Weight

Sample No. 1 was separated into fractions by gel filtration chromatography under the conditions described below. The amount of uronic acids contained in each fraction was quantified by the carbazole-sulfuric acid method. In addition, absorbance at 280 nm of each fraction was measured, and the absorbance was defined as a value reflecting the amount of protein contained therein. Based on these results, a uronic acid amount chromatogram and a 280-nm protein amount chromatogram were drawn. Fig. 2 shows a superimposition of the uronic acid amount chromatogram and the 280-nm protein amount chromatogram. The amount of uronic acid in the total amount of Sample No. 1 (about 65 g) was about 12 g.

[0060]

Fig. 2 shows the uronic acid amount chromatogram together with the position of each fraction in which each molecular weight marker was eluted. Since the amount of each fraction in the gel filtration chromatography was 1 mL/tube as described below, the horizontal axis, i.e., "Elution Volume (mL)," in Fig. 2 also reflects the fraction No.

Gel Filtration Chromatography Conditions

Column: Sepharose CL-2B filled column (1-cm dia. × 50 cm column filled with Sepharose CL-2B as a carrier.

Sepharose CL-2B has a dextran fractionation range of 100 to 20,000 kDa, and is available from GE Healthcare and other companies.

Sepharose CL-2B is a 2% crosslinked agarose with a particle size

of 60 to 200 μm (measured by the laser diffraction scattering method), and is registered under CAS registry No. 65099-79-8.)
Buffer: 0.1 M phosphate buffer (pH of 7.1, containing 0.2 M NaCl)
Amount of applied sample: 1 mg/ml in terms of uronic acid

5 Flow rate: 0.15 mL/min

Amount of fraction: 1 mL/tube

Molecular weight analytical curve: The various dextran molecular weight markers described below were subjected to gel filtration chromatography under the same conditions as described above

10 (except that the amount of the sample applied was 1 mg/1 mL of buffer), and absorbance (which reflects the dextran amount) of each fraction was measured by the phenol-sulfuric acid method to prepare a calibration curve.

[0061]

15 Dextran Molecular Weight Markers

Dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* (mol wt 5,000,000 - 40,000,000) (Sigma) ... for measuring the void volume of the column, 20,000 kDa

Dextran Standard 1,400,000 (Sigma) ... 1,400 kDa

20 Dextran Standard 670,000 (Sigma) ... 670 kDa

Dextran Standard 410,000 (Sigma) ... 410 kDa

Dextran Standard 270,000 (Sigma) ... 270 kDa

The dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* was used after being subjected to a pretreatment to remove low-molecular-weight dextran contained in the marker. The pretreatment was
25 performed by eluting the dextran from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* under the conditions described above in "Gel Filtration Chromatography Conditions" (the applied amount was the amount for marker) to collect molecules having a molecular weight of not
30 less than 20,000 kDa, and freeze-drying. More specifically, a chromatogram reflecting the dextran amount was prepared by measuring the absorbance of each fraction by the phenol-sulfuric acid method. The fraction that corresponded to a first peak in the chromatogram was collected and freeze-dried (it is believed
35 that dextran having a molecular weight of not less than 20,000

kDa was thereby obtained). This lyophilizate was actually used as a marker (for measuring the void volume of the column).

[0062]

Measurement of absorbance to obtain a chromatogram reflecting the dextran amount was performed according to the method (the phenol-sulfuric acid method) described in Hodge, J.E. and Hofreiter, B.T., *Methods in Carbohydrate Chemistry*, 1, 338 (1962). More specifically, the measurement was carried out as follows.

10 [1] 500 μ L of a sample aqueous solution is placed in a 105 $\times$ 15 mm test tube.

[2] 500 μ L of a phenol reagent (5 v/v% aqueous phenol solution) is added thereto, and the mixture is stirred.

15 [3] 2.5 mL of concentrated sulfuric acid is added thereto, and the mixture is immediately stirred vigorously for 10 seconds.

[4] The mixture is left to stand for 20 minutes or more at room temperature.

[5] The absorbance at 490 nm is measured with a spectrophotometer.

[0063]

20 The obtained calibration curve was ($y = -4.3446\ln(x) + 56.68$; $R^2 = 0.9823$). From the R^2 value, it was found that the molecular weight and the fraction No. (i.e., elution volume) were highly correlated.

[0064]

25 As shown in Fig. 2, Sample No. 1 was found to contain high-molecular-weight proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 (in particular, a molecular weight of not less than 5,000,000).

[0065]

30 A commercially available "proteoglycan" product was also analyzed in the same manner for comparison. Fig. 3 shows a superimposition of a uronic acid amount chromatogram and a 280-nm protein amount chromatogram. In the uronic acid amount chromatogram of Fig. 3, the position of each fraction at which each dextran molecular weight marker was eluted was also shown.

35

The obtained calibration curve was $(y = -3.943\ln(x) + 59.069; R^2 = 0.9978)$. From the R^2 value, it was found that the molecular weight and the fraction No. (i.e., elution volume) were highly correlated. As shown in Fig. 3, the commercially available proteoglycan product substantially contains no proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 and in particular, contains no proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000. The commercially available proteoglycan product is hereinafter referred to as "Sample No. 2."

[0066]

The proportion of the uronic acid amount of proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 in each of Sample Nos. 1 and 2, relative to the total uronic acid content of the entire sample, was calculated based on the uronic acid chromatogram shown in Fig. 2 or 3. More specifically, the proportion was obtained by calculating the proportion of the area of uronic acids having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 based on the entire peak area in the uronic acid amount chromatogram shown in Fig. 2 or 3. Even more specifically, on the uronic acid amount chromatogram, a vertical line was drawn from an elution volume point corresponding to a molecular weight of 1,800,000 in the uronic acid amount chromatogram, and calculating the ratio of the two areas of the chromatogram divided by the vertical line. The proportion of the uronic acid amount of proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 in each of Sample Nos. 1 and 2, relative to the uronic acid content of the entire sample, was also calculated in a similar manner. Table 1 shows the results.

[0067]

Table 1

Molecular weight	Not less than 5,000,000 (500×10^4)	Not less than 1,800,000 (180×10^4)
Sample No. 1	37.9%	55.8%
Sample No. 2	0.0%	3.0%

[0068]

Examination of the Effect on Osteoarthritis

<Production of model mice>

Osteoarthritis model mice were produced in the following manner. Six-week-old C57bl6 mice (males: about 20 to 22 g) were purchased from Japan SLC, Inc. 0.3 ml of Ketalar (50 mg/ml) and 0.1 ml of Celactal (2%) were subcutaneously injected into a thigh of each of the mice to place the mice under general anesthesia. The mice were shaved around the knee joints and prepared for surgery. The right hind paw of the mice was subjected to anterior cruciate ligament transection and medial meniscectomy. Conversely, in the left hind paw of the mice, the joint capsule was incised similarly to the right paw; however, the skin was sutured without damaging the ligament or meniscus to perform a sham operation (sham surgery). Moderately impaired mice that were subjected to anterior cruciate ligament transection and partial meniscectomy were thus prepared.

[0069]

Administration of Test Samples to the Model Mice

The mice were divided into four groups as shown in Table 2 (n = 10). With the assumption that the daily intake amount of feed per mouse is 4 g, each sample (Sample No. 1 or 2) was added to a general feed for experimental animals in an amount shown in Table 2 to make the total amount 4 g. However, since Sample No. 2 contained an excipient, Sample No. 2 was added in an amount such that the proteoglycan content of the feed was 5 mg (Table 2).

[0070]

Table 2

Group	Content
	Feed sample
Group 1	0.5 mg of Sample No. 1, 4 g of feed per day
Group 2	5 mg of Sample No. 1, 4 g of feed per day
Group 3	25 mg of Sample No. 1, 4 g of feed per day
Group 4	5 mg of Sample No. 2, 4 g of feed per day

[0071]

After performing surgery to prepare the above model mice, a test was conducted according to the following schedule.

Specifically, the feeds containing the samples were fed to the model mice for 4 weeks after the surgery. During the feeding period, the mice were kept, 5 mice per cage, at a room temperature of $23\pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ and a humidity of 50-60%, with free access to feed; activity was not restricted. The intake amount was measured when the feeds were replaced every one week; the daily intake amount per mouse was estimated. Fig. 4 shows an overview of the test schedule. A control group that received only a general feed for experimental animals (CE-2) was also investigated.

[0072]

Four weeks after the surgery, each mouse was placed under anesthesia (0.3 ml of Ketalar (50 mg/ml) and 0.1 ml of Celactal (2%) were subcutaneously injected) to collect blood from the heart and remove the knee joints. After the mice were shaved in the same manner as for surgery, each femur and tibia pair were cut off, placed in the same direction, placed in a sample pack, and fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde for 24 hours. Thereafter, the bones were decalcified with EDTA (0.5 mol) for 3 weeks, and the resulting bone tissues were embedded in paraffin to prepare decalcified specimens having a thickness of about 5 μm . The specimens were sectioned and then stained with hematoxylin and eosin (HE staining), and with Safranin O (Safranin O staining). Safranin O is a basic dye that binds to acidic glycosaminoglycans to produce an orange color. Therefore, Safranin O is used as an indicator of cartilage tissue. After staining, three evaluators scored each group in terms of the following three items:

"Safranin O" (staining range; indicating the amount of glycosaminoglycans), "Chondrocyte" (the number of chondrocytes), and "Structure" (cartilage surface structure) using the modified Mankin score, and evaluated joint cartilage lesion using the average values. Statistical analysis was performed according to the Bonferroni/Dunn method for multiple comparisons.

[0073]

The Mankin score is highly reliable because 1)

comparisons are made with human cases, and 2) changes are examined over time. The Mankin score is generally used as a method for evaluating cartilage degeneration. Table 3 shows the criteria of each item of the modified Mankin score used in this analysis.

[0074]

[Table 3]

Table 3 Modified Mankin score (criteria for histological evaluation)
Safranin O-fast green staining
0 = uniform staining throughout articular cartilage
1 = loss of staining in the superficial zone for less than one-half of the length of the plateau
2 = loss of staining in the superficial zone for one-half or more of the length of the plateau
3 = loss of staining in the superficial and middle zones for less than one-half of the length of the plateau
4 = loss of staining in the superficial and middle zones for one-half or more of the length of the plateau
5 = loss of staining in all 3 zones for less than one-half of the length of the plateau
6 = loss of staining in all 3 zones for one-half or more of the length of the plateau
Chondrocyte loss
0 = no decrease in cells
1 = minimal decrease in cells
2 = moderate decrease in cells
3 = marked decrease in cells
4 = very extensive decrease in cells
Structure
0 = normal
1 = surface irregularities
2 = 1-3 superficial clefts
3 = >3 superficial clefts
4 = 1-3 clefts extending into the middle zone
5 = >3 clefts extending into the middle zone
6 = 1-3 clefts extending into the deep zone
7 = >3 clefts extending into the deep zone
8 = clefts extending to calcified cartilage

[0075]

10 <Analysis results>

Table 4 shows the measurement results of the feed intake amount and body weight (average values) of each group.

[0076]

Table 4

	Intake amount (g/day)	Body weight (g) immediately after the surgery	Body weight (g) four weeks after the surgery
Control	3.6	Not recorded	Not recorded
Group 1	5.18	22.59	25.59
Group 2	4.93	21.92	25.43
Group 3	4.68	20.98	24.25

Group 4	4.90	21.14	24.58
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[0077]

Fig. 5 shows images (representative examples) of each group after Safranin O staining.

[0078]

5 Figs. 6a to 6d show analysis results of scoring each group in terms of the above three items (by three assessors) using the Mankin score, based on the histological images. In Figs. 6a to 6d, OA shows the results of the control, Low-Concentration PG shows the results of group 1, Intermediate-Concentration PG shows the results of group 2, High-Concentration PG shows the results of group 3, and Other Company's PG shows the results of group 4. Fig. 6a shows the analysis results of "Safranin O." Fig. 6b shows analysis results of "Chondrocyte" (the number of chondrocytes). Fig. 6c shows analysis results of "Structure" (cartilage surface structure). Fig. 6d shows the results of analyzing the total score of these three items. The description about the number n of the mice in Fig. 6a also applies to Figs. 6b to 6d.

[0079]

20 These results confirmed that Sample No. 1 significantly suppressed cartilage lesion development of osteoarthritis model mice, whereas Sample No. 2 did not exhibit cartilage lesion inhibitory effects.

[0080]

25 These results show that proteoglycans having low molecular weights are ineffective for osteoarthritis through oral intake, whereas proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 (particularly preferably not less than 5,000,000) can prevent or treat osteoarthritis through oral
30 intake.

CLAIMS

Claim 1

A composition for preventing or treating osteoarthritis,
comprising a fish cartilage water extract containing
5 proteoglycans having molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000.

Claim 2

The composition for preventing or treating
osteoarthritis according to claim 1, comprising a fish cartilage
water extract containing proteoglycans having molecular weights
10 of not less than 5,000,000.

Claim 3

The composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the
amount of uronic acids derived from the proteoglycans having
molecular weights of not less than 1,800,000 accounts for at
15 least 10 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the fish
cartilage water extract.

Claim 4

The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3,
wherein the amount of uronic acids derived from the proteoglycans
20 having molecular weights of not less than 5,000,000 accounts for
at least 7 mass% of the total uronic acid content of the fish
cartilage water extract.

Claim 5

The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4,
25 wherein the fish cartilage water extract is a hot-water extract
of fish cartilage.

Claim 6

The composition for preventing or treating
osteoarthritis according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the
30 fish cartilage is salmon cartilage or trout cartilage.