CLAIMS

[Claim 1]

~~A joint function-improving~~ Use of a composition containing bacterial cells and/or a culture of a bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* ~~as an active ingredient~~ in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical composition for improving joint function.

[Claim 2]

The ~~joint function-improving composition~~ use of claim 1, wherein the bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* is one or more selected from *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius*, *Lactococcus lactis*, *Lactococcus laudensis*, *Streptococcus oralis*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium pseudolongum* and *Bifidobacterium thermophilum*.

[Claim 3]

The ~~joint function-improving composition~~ use of claim 2, wherein the bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus salivarius*, *Lactococcus lactis* or *Bifidobacterium longum* is a bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus salivarius* subsp. *salivarius*, *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis*, *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *cremoris* or *Bifidobacterium longum* subsp. *infantis*.

[Claim 4]

The ~~joint function-improving composition~~ use according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* is one or more selected from *Lactobacillus acidophilus* strain SBT2062 (FERM BP-11075), *Lactobacillus helveticus* strain SBT2161 (NITE BP-1707) and strain SBT2171 (FERM BP-5445), *Lactobacillus salivarius* strain SBT2687 (NITE ABP-03331) and strain SBT2651 (NITE P-03330), *Lactobacillus salivarius* subsp. *salivarius* strain SBT2670 (FERM P-13247), *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis* strain SBT0625 (NITE P-03078), *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *cremoris* strain SBT11373 (NITE P-03246), *Lactococcus laudensis* strain SBT11178 (NITE P-03333), *Streptococcus oralis* strain SBT0320 (NITE P-03332),

Bifidobacterium longum strain SBT2928 (FERM P-10657), *Bifidobacterium longum* subsp. *infantis* strain SBT2785 (NITE P-03328), *Bifidobacterium pseudolongum* strain SBT2922 (NITE P-02984) and *Bifidobacterium thermophilum* strain SBT2992 (NITE P-03329).

[Claim 5]

~~A joint function-improving agent, a joint function-improving food or drink, a joint function-improving nutritional composition, joint function-improving feed or a joint function-improving pharmaceutical agent containing the joint function-improving composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4.~~The use according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the composition is an agent, a food or drink, a nutritional composition, or a feed.

[Claim 6]

A novel lactic acid bacterium, *Lactobacillus salivarius* strain SBT2687.

[Claim 7]

A novel lactic acid bacterium, *Lactobacillus salivarius* strain SBT2651.

[Claim 8]

Lactococcus laudensis strain SBT11178.

[Claim 9]

A novel lactic acid bacterium, *Streptococcus oralis* strain SBT0320.

[Claim 10]

A novel *Bifidobacterium* strain, *Bifidobacterium longum* subsp. *infantis* strain SBT2785.

[Claim 11]

A novel *Bifidobacterium* strain, *Bifidobacterium thermophilum* strain SBT2992.

~~[Claim 12]~~

~~Use of bacterial cells and/or a culture of a bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* for the manufacture of a joint function-improving composition.~~

~~[Claim 13]~~

~~Bacterial cells and/or a culture of a bacterium belonging to genera~~

~~*Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* for use in the improvement of joint function.~~

~~[Claim 14]~~

~~A method for improving joint function comprising causing a subject in need thereof to take an effective amount of bacterial cells and/or a culture of a bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* or administering an effective amount of the bacterial cells and/or the culture to the subject.~~

~~[Claim 15]~~

~~A composition for promoting growth of chondrocytes, suppressing production of an inflammation factor, suppressing production of a cartilage matrix degradation factor, suppressing production of a pain factor and/or suppressing production of a neuronal outgrowth factor containing bacterial cells and/or a culture of a bacterium belonging to genera *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus* or *Bifidobacterium* as an active ingredient.~~