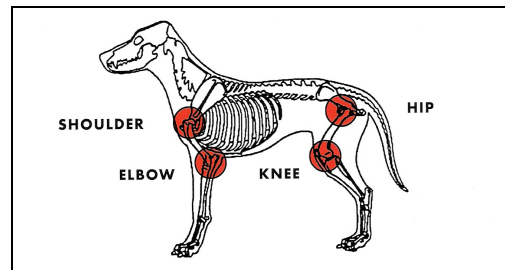


ARTHRITIS AND YOUR PETS

Arthritis is a gradual degenerative joint disease where the body's joints become worn out, stiff and painful. It is a common condition seen particularly in aged dogs, but may affect dogs of all ages and breeds. It often goes unnoticed at first as symptoms can develop slowly over time. Joints in the body depend on a layer of cartilage acting as a cushion and providing a smooth surface for bones to move freely over each other. Fluid in the joints helps this process and acts as a lubricant. With arthritis there is deterioration in the cartilage and the fluid so that the movement of the bones is less smooth and causes pain.

Why does arthritis develop?

Arthritis can develop for a number of different reasons. Wear and tear associated with older age is the most common reason for arthritis. Breed, weight, injuries, and other disorders can all contribute. Large breed dogs can be more susceptible to joint problems. Dogs who are overweight may have more stress on their joints. Trauma from an accident involving a joint can cause it to deteriorate. Conditions like hip dysplasia can lead to joint health deteriorating.



Common positions for arthritis include the hips, shoulders, knees, and elbows

Signs you may see in your pet

- Stiffness after getting up from rest, especially in the morning
- Reluctance to go on walks, run and play
- Reluctance to jump in the car, onto your lap, go up stairs etc.
- Limping
- Personality change – irritable/aggressive
- Reluctance to be patted on limbs, back, hips
- Vocalising/yelping in pain
- Swelling of joints
- Licking excessively/chewing at joints

How can you find out if your pet has arthritis?

Examination of your pet's musculoskeletal system by a vet can help determine if they have developed arthritis. X-rays are often required to help confirm a diagnosis of arthritis. X-rays may show narrowing of joint spaces, extra bone deposited around the joint, and even degeneration of joint cartilage.

What can be done to help my pet?

Although arthritis is unable to be cured medically, there are many things that can be done to make your pet's life more comfortable. Medical treatment usually relies upon a combination of methods including pain relief and products that provide nutrition and support to the joints.

(1) **NSAIDS – (Non Steroidal Anti-inflammatories)** are medications that relieve pain and inflammation. There is a range of medications available, and many of the newer medications enable safe long-term use with minimal side effects.

(2) **Pentosan** is a drug which helps actively repair and maintain joints. It encourages new cartilage formation and increases and improves the joint fluid. The result is a joint that is better lubricated and

smoother running. Pentosan is given as a course of injections over 4 weeks and effects often last up to 1 year. Course can be repeated more frequently if necessary.

(3) **Joint guard** – a natural anti-inflammatory and joint protective compound which comes in a powder form to sprinkle on your pets food or a tasty chewable treat . It can be safely used with NSAIDS and pentosan.

(4) **Fishoil** – full of omega acids helpful for good joint function and packaged in a liquid form for easy dosing to a range of weights and sizes.

In addition to medications there are things you can do at home to help your pet's arthritis.

- (1) Ensure they have a warm well padded bed, away from draughts and preferably elevated from the cold floor
- (2) Provide them with gentle regular exercise to keep the joints moving and the muscles toned
- (3) Ensure your pet does not become overweight
- (4) Feed older pets foods marketed for senior pets, some of these foods even have glucosamine and omega acids added for good joint health.

With a combination of treatments, and some changes to your pet's lifestyle at home, we can often successfully manage arthritis and provide a good quality of life for your special friends.

