

Slow acting drugs:

- Slow-acting drugs for arthritis ultimately **improve joint function** and help with pain relief, but they require a time frame of weeks to months to exert their effect.
- They may have **disease-modifying properties** such that their benefit continues even after their use has been curtailed.
- These products are typically what are called **neutraceuticals**, meaning that they are nutritional supplements that have medicinal properties.
- These products often **complement** treatment with anti-inflammatory medications

Exercise

- Proper **exercise is excellent physical therapy** for the arthritic pet, as it is crucial to **maintain as much muscle mass as possible** to support the abnormal joint.
- Arthritic dogs need **regular, gentle exercise**. Short walks are best. Over-exertion, as with fetching, Frisbee tossing or running, can sometimes aggravate arthritis; **slower exercise or swimming is very beneficial**.
- **Two 15 minute sessions** are generally better than one 30 minute one.
- **Massage and gentle flexion/extension** of the joint may also help.
- **Do not over-do on cold or hot days**, as older pets are less tolerant of temperature extremes.

Weight Management

- Being overweight places **excess stress** on joints and decreases exercise tolerance.
- To control being overweight, ask us for **specific feeding recommendations** and a weight control plan.
- Older, inactive pets may only need **half the calories** they did when they were younger.

Other Factors

- Arthritic dogs are most stiff when they lay around, especially on cold surfaces. **Encourage your pet to sleep on a bed or blanket** and not on the cold, hard floor or ground.
- There are several other diseases and conditions that cause symptoms similar to arthritis, including **intervertebral disc disease, spondylosis, ligament tears, and discospondylitis**. It may be necessary to have x-rays done to be sure arthritis is really the problem.
- Keep in close contact with us so we can keep your pet as healthy and pain free as possible.

Remember!

Animals don't necessarily moan, whimper or stop eating until the pain is intolerable. There is no need for your pet to suffer from untreated arthritis.



Arthritis



Salisbury: 01722 416245

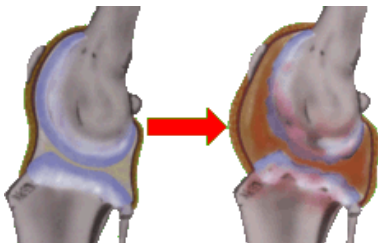
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Arthritis facts

- Arthritis (**degenerative joint disease**) is extremely common in older pets, especially the larger breeds.
- It is the number one cause of **chronic pain** in dogs **and** cats.
- **It can affect any joint**, but the hips, shoulders and back are most common.
- The condition is the result of **long-term stresses on a joint**, either resulting from an old injury or from natural development of a poorly conformed joint.
- **It occurs when cartilage in the joint is damaged.** Cartilage decreases joint stress by acting like a gelatinous shock absorber. When cartilage is damaged, inflammatory changes occur which eventually lead to destruction of the cartilage and subsequent damage to the underlying bone.
- **Arthritis is often progressive, becoming worse over time** - sometimes quickly but usually slowly and gradually. It may start as intermittent, occasional sore days, in colder weather or with strenuous exercise.



- As arthritis progresses, **the lameness and stiffness become more frequent** and is usually worse when your pet first gets up after lying down but gets a little better as he or she moves around.

Symptoms include:

- decreased activity
- reluctance to walk, climb stairs
 - jump or play
 - limping
- difficulty rising from a resting position
 - lagging behind on walks
 - soreness when touched
- yelping or whimpering in pain
- acting aggressive or withdrawn or other

Treatment options

personality changes.

While surgery may be able to help in some situations, most of the time the **degeneration of the joint cannot be reversed** and **treatment focuses on preventing/slowing progression** of damage.

Fast Acting Drugs:

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs):

- **These medications act quickly** by suppressing the inflammatory biochemicals (prostaglandins) that ultimately lead not only to the pain of arthritis but also to cartilage damage.

- Human NSAIDs tend to be toxic to pets, especially cats. **Never use a human medication of any kind in a pet without specific instructions on how to do so from your vet.**
- Pre-treatment screening **blood tests are still important before using an NSAID** as a pre-existing kidney or liver condition may preclude their use. **Monitoring tests typically are recommended every six months** for pets on NSAIDs.
- It is important to mention that **cats are uniquely sensitive to all NSAIDs** and it is tricky to find one that is appropriate. Only meloxicam (Meloxid) is appropriate for long-term feline use and only with some dose modification.

Analgesics that are not Anti-inflammatory:

- Sometimes the combination of a cartilage-protecting agent and an anti-inflammatory drug is not adequate for pain control.
- There are several appropriate pain relievers that can be used in pets. **These medications are strictly analgesics and do not modify the inflammation in the joint.**
- **Tramadol** is an example of an analgesic we may decide to use.
- A synergism occurs when these medications are combined with NSAIDs such that the **combination of both drugs produces greater results than one would expect.**

Cartrophen Vet Injections:

- Cartrophen Vet **protects and supports the recovery of joint cartilage** and slows down the disease development. Cartrophen Vet relieves pain and lameness by actually treating the disease.