

Dogs rely on their legs and joints to maintain mobility. They are naturally athletic animals and eventually this activity can take its toll. Many older dogs have arthritis but because they cannot tell us they are in pain, it is often seen only as stiffness.

Arthritis & Degenerative Joint Disease

Your dog may be reluctant to jump down from the car. He may limp at the beginning of a walk or show stiffness when getting out of his basket in the morning. Some dogs with arthritis are less interested in play and can be less tolerant towards children or other dogs. Licking or chewing at joints can also be a sign of pain.

Although some wear and tear is inevitable, there are many products available that can slow down the progress of the disease and promote healing of the cartilage.

Arthritis

How do I know my pet has Arthritis?

Dogs and cats generally do not show obvious signs of pain. As they are unable to tell us whether they are sore we need to look out for the following signs:

the signs...

- Slow to get up after lying down
- Stiffness after rest or exercise
- Difficulty jumping e.g. into car or chair
- Difficulty climbing the stairs
- Reluctance to exercise or tires easily
- Lameness whilst walking or running
- Reduced appetite
- Lacklustre behaviour
- Licking or evidence of self injury

How is Arthritis treated?

Arthritis cannot be cured and will need management for the rest of your dog's life. There are things you can do to help your dog:

Speak to your Veterinary Surgeon

There are many products available to relieve painful joints. Your vet may prescribe NSAIDs (non-steroidal

anti-inflammatory drugs) which will reduce pain and stiffness.

Control Weight

An overweight dog puts a lot of extra strain on his joints. Weight reduction by increasing exercise is not recommended with an arthritic dog so a calorie controlled diet should be fed. Once the excess weight has gone you should see a marked difference in your dog's mobility.

Gentle Exercise

Regular, gentle exercise will help maintain mobility, keep your dog from stiffening up and ensure he enjoys life. Avoid occasional energetic exercise or rough play which will simply cause pain afterwards.

Supplements

Nutritional joint supplements may be given to help joint function. Please discuss this option with your veterinary surgeon.

Alternative Therapies

Acupuncture can have a pain relieving effect. It also has a beneficial effect on the immune system, increasing ability to fight disease and giving a whole body improvement.

Hydrotherapy allows careful controlled swimming as a low impact form of exercise. It improves fitness and builds muscle mass which helps support joints.

Physiotherapy - massage and physiotherapy can warm up the muscles before and after exercise.

There are a number of things that can be done to aid a dog with arthritis. Your veterinary surgeon or nurse can offer regular checks and advice and create a personal management plan to help you give your dog a greater quality of life. Arthritis awareness nurse clinics are free appointments where you can get tailored advice to suit your dog's needs.

Degenerative Joint Disease

How do you know when it's going wrong and what you can do about it?

Joint deterioration usually occurs with ageing. Damage can also occur earlier in life when the joint is subjected to abnormal forces experienced when training, hunting, during competition or after a traumatic injury. Such cartilage damage can initiate a series of more extensive changes within the joint and a cycle of degeneration can be set in motion.

Now, joint supplements can help...

There is a huge variation of quality and effectiveness in joint supplements. Many are poor and labelling can mean contents are difficult to determine.

Ask your vet what the most effective products are and the two key elements to look for:

By giving joint supplements we maximise the quality of the repaired joint cartilage.

THE REPAIRER

Glucosamine HCl (not Glucosamine Sulphate)

- Provide natural protection against the cartilage damaging effects of anti-inflammatory drugs
- Prevents cartilage thinning
- Improves joint mobility

THE BUILDER

Chondroitin Sulphate

- Preventing joint space narrowing
- Stimulating joint fluid synthesis
- Reducing drug intake
- Improving joint function

