

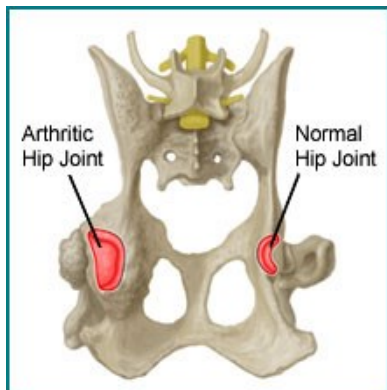


In addition to the above we offer our clients Information/access to a hydrotherapy, acupuncture and physiotherapy, which may be beneficial to many arthritic patients.

What is the outlook for my arthritic pet?

Osteoarthritis may progress slowly (over many years) or very quickly (months or even weeks). It all depends on your pets age, activity levels, the joints affected and under-lying cause. Some pet's pain and loss of mobility can be kept to a minimum for long periods of time with proper management.

Your veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse can determine the best course of treatment for your pets' particular condition. There is no reason why, with your loving attention and committed care, your osteoarthritic pet cannot have a happy, healthy and comfortable life for many years to come.



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Osteo-arthritis



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Osteoarthritis is a chronic, degenerative joint disease that makes movement difficult and painful; osteoarthritis mainly affects pets in their middle and senior years, although younger animals may be affected too.

It can be heart breaking to see your once lively, active best friend start to limp, or feel pain when moving around. There is no cure for osteoarthritis. However, if treated promptly, there is a great deal that you and your vet can do to decrease your pets discomfort and increase their mobility; keeping them active and happy into old age.

Early warning signs

- Difficulty walking, climbing stairs, jumping into back of car or getting in and out of litter tray
- An overall decrease in activity, especially playing
- Resting more than usual
- Slowness in getting up from a lying position
- Dogs may 'bunny hop' with back legs, rather than walk normally
- Cats may fail to groom themselves, eat less and lose weight.
- Slow, stiff movement when walking after a rest, or in cold weather
- Beginning to limp
- Swollen joints that may be warm to the touch
- Licking or biting joints
- Behavioural or personality changes; these may include getting grumpy or unwilling to go outside or for a walk



If you notice any of the signs listed, don't just think your pet is 'slowing down with age', Bring him along to see the vet. The faster osteoarthritis is first diagnosed and treated, the better your pet's quality of life will be.

What causes osteoarthritis?

There are many causes of osteoarthritis, but the main reasons are;

- Injury to joint
- 'Wear and tear'
- Obesity, an excessive load put onto joints
- Developmental defects that alters joint shape
- Genetic, some breeds of dog are more prone than others

Whatever the specific cause, stress on a joint can begin a destructive cycle of inflammation of the joint area and damage to cartilage that leads to pain for your pet.



How is osteoarthritis treated?

Treatment includes 3 main components, each are equally important.

Weight control; Dogs or cats that suffer from chronic pain caused by conditions like osteoarthritis often become inactive, which can result in obesity. Controlling your pet's weight will lighten the load on arthritic joints and make it less difficult to move around.

Weight loss for animals involves both a well balanced, calorie reduced diet and regular exercise. A veterinary nurse can prepare a weight loss plan specifically for your pet.

Exercise is essential because it contributes to strengthening the muscles that support the joints. A daily, moderate amount of low impact exercise also improves joint mobility and can help get a lethargic, arthritic pet active again. Dogs will benefit from activities such as walking and swimming. Cats will benefit from play that keeps them moving without excessive jumping. A veterinary nurse can prepare a mobility plan specifically for your pet.

Anti-inflammatory drugs; a group of drugs that reduce the inflammation in the joints, thus relieving pain, increasing mobility, and protecting the joint from further damage. Newer drugs are proving to be especially effective in reducing inflammation and pain to improve mobility without significant side effects. As well as the anti-inflammatory drugs there are a group of drugs called nutraceuticals, these are made of substances that help the joints remain lubricated and can even help reduce the inflammation within the joint itself. A veterinary nurse can advise you if nutraceuticals are appropriate for your pet.

Our nursing team offer free Senior health consultations to discuss your pet's needs