



Arthritis

Arthritis, also known as degenerative joint disease (DJD), is a breakdown of the protective cartilage and bone surrounding joints. The process begins with excessive motion in a joint that eventually leads to a wearing-down of cartilage. As a result inflammation develops in the joint and movement becomes painful. These changes generally appear later in life, but if mechanical or hereditary defects are severe, signs can appear in younger pets.

Symptoms of arthritis may include pain, stiffness, a limp or swelling. One of our veterinarians can discuss ways to assess the degree of arthritis. This can include careful palpation of the joints, lameness evaluation and/or radiographs (x-rays).

There are many different ways to help ease the pain associated with arthritis. Some or all of these may be appropriate for your pet, so please have a discussion with the veterinarian about what might be best.

› Weight management: This is the single most important tool to achieve relief from arthritis pain. During your pet's physical examination, one of our vets will discuss your pet's weight and whether a change will be beneficial.

› Exercise: It is best to avoid being a "weekend warrior" with your pet. Instead, consistent low-impact and moderate exercise provides the greatest benefit for our arthritic pets. Please discuss with the veterinarian what exercises may be most beneficial for your pet.

› Supplements: Supplements such as fish oil, glucosamine and chondroitin are some beneficial supplements for your pet's joint health. We have a variety of supplements. Most of these are taste guaranteed. We are happy to discuss which supplement might be best for your pet.

› Pain management: Treating arthritis pain is important. The less pain in a joint the more mobility there will be. We are happy to discuss the signs of pain your pet is having and medication that is most appropriate.

› Physical therapy: This has been available to humans for many years and is now becoming common for animals with similar conditions. Some exercises and stretches can even be performed at home for maximum benefit.

› Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medication: These can be used alone or together. This is a way of looking at the individual pet and providing the best care for their needs. It is useful for arthritis as well as many other conditions.

› Plasma Rich Platelet Therapy: This uses your pet's natural growth factors to promote healing and alleviate pain.

Since arthritis is a degenerative disease, even if only one or two of these topics may be appropriate currently, please feel free to revisit this list periodically as more may be appropriate in the future. Please keep us posted on your pet's progress!