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There are more cats than ever – which means more cases of osteoarthritis. It's known that 1 in 3 cats develop some sort of degenerative joint disease, and that cats above the age of 12 years have a greater chance of developing arthritis. It's something that is going to happen at some point in a cat's life.

3. HOTSPOTS

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No dog wants to end up homeless — after all, sitting in a cage at a pound is hardly anyone's idea of a good time. Tragically, the dogs who wait the longest to be chosen are often the ones with the least time to waste.

ARTHRITIS—DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE

Does your pet take a while to get moving in the morning? Does he hobble out of bed? Is he reluctant to use the stairs? Is your elderly cat not jumping up on the bed or couch anymore?

These can all be signs of DJD (degenerative joint disease or arthritis). They can be subtle signs and can develop very slowly so that often owners may just think their pet is getting old and slowing down. There are a number of ways that you can make your pet more comfortable during the winter months.

BEDDING IS VERY IMPORTANT

Trampoline type beds can be very useful as they get your pet up off the ground. Bedding should be thick and padded. There are many types of bedding available these days.

NUTRICEUTICALS

There are many types available including 4-cyte and Sasha's Blend. They are added to the pet's food and may be useful, but can take some weeks to have effect.

PENTOSAN POLYSULPHATE

These are a course of injections that are given weekly for four weeks. They work to retard the progression of arthritis. They treat the underlying disease process not just the symptoms.

NSAID's – Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

These provide pain relief as well as having an anti-inflammatory effect. These can be used long term in chronically arthritic patients.

EXERCISE – This is important as joints benefit from regular movement.

DIET – Formulated specifically for joint problems. These are beneficial but also take some weeks to have an effect.

WEIGHT LOSS – If your pet is overweight just shedding those extra kilos can make a big difference to the joints.

CATS are very discrete creatures and often owners are unaware their elderly cat is suffering from joint pain. Reluctance to jump up on to the bed, couch or bench is often a sign of arthritis. If in doubt it is worth booking an appointment with one of our vets. We have had some cases that have responded remarkably to treatment of arthritis.

A healthy diet can work to encourage and maintain joint health. As your faithful companion enters its senior years, you may find it starts to suffer from arthritis.

Hills Prescription Diet™ j/d™

Reduces cartilage degradation, joint inflammation and discomfort in cats and dogs.



For your canine and feline patients with arthritis, the right nutrition can make all the difference when it comes to disease management, improving mobility, and easing pain.

Hill's Prescription Diet™ j/d™ interrupts the cycle of damage by helping to reduce cartilage degradation, joint inflammation and discomfort. It also helps to preserve healthy joint cartilage.





Hill's Prescription Diet j/d canine is clinically tested to help your canine walk and run better, play better and climb stairs more easily in as little as 21 days. In addition to this, for those dogs that are having their arthritis managed medically j/d canine is a great compliment to current medical treatments with some cases being able to reduce the dosage of NSAID by 25%.

Hill's Prescription diet j/d feline is clinically proven to help cats with arthritis be more active in as little as 28 days. Osteoarthritis is the most common cause of chronic pain in dogs. It affects 20% of dogs over one year of age, and is in the top 10 health problems diagnosed in dogs over seven years of age.

There are many factors that predispose pets to developing osteoarthritis. Obesity and developmental orthopaedic diseases like hip and elbow dysplasia are common causes. Previous trauma to the joint from accidental injury or surgery can also play a role. Once the joint is damaged or placed under excessive strain, damage occurs to the chondrocytes, the cells that create the cartilage that cushions the joint. The damaged chondrocytes release substances that result in inflammation of the joint which begins a vicious cycle of deterioration. Over time the cartilage disappears resulting in reduced mobility and pain.

J/d Mobility contains high levels of EPA, an omega 3 fatty acid from fish oil that helps to break the cycle of inflammation in arthritic joints. It also contains glucosamine and chondroitin to help protect the cartilage from further deterioration. Because obesity has a major role to play in osteoarthritis, J/d Mobility has a controlled calorie content and added L-carnitine, to help to support lean muscle mass and burn fat. This helps maintain your pet at a healthy weight and take the stress off arthritic joints. J/d Mobility is a complete and balanced diet that contains clinically proven antioxidants to support your dog's immune system.

Key Benefits:

- Clinically proven to increase mobility in dogs with osteoarthritis.
- High levels of EPA, an omega 3 fatty acid that helps reduce inflammation.
- Controlled calorie content and L-carnitine to help maintain a healthy weight.
- Clinically proven antioxidants to support the immune system.

Hills j/d tastes great and is available as both a dry and canned food.

NEW HILL'S™ PRESCRIPTION DIET™

Metabolic + Mobility

Two conditions, one food designed for dogs with weight issues, arthritis – or both.

- Reduces body weight by 13% in 60 days.
- Improves mobility in as little as 21 days.
- 88% of pets lost weight at home in 2 months.
- Omega-3 fatty acids reduce inflammation and loss of cartilage.

- Synergistic blend of ingredients naturally improves metabolism.
- Glucosamine and Chondroitin help provide building blocks for cartilage repair and interrupt degradation of cartilage.

Source: Hill's.com

For more information, call Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital on 9524 6644 to talk to one of our qualified Veterinary Nurses.

MANAGING THE PAIN OF FELINE OSTEOARTHRITIS

There are more cats than ever – which means more cases of osteoarthritis. It's known that 1 in 3 cats develop some sort of degenerative joint disease, and that cats above the age of 12 years have a greater chance of developing arthritis. It's something that is going to happen at some point in a cat's life.

Until relatively recently, arthritis in cats was not commonly diagnosed or treated. This may be due in part to the cats' survival instinct to hide signs of pain, and the lack of recognition of the condition by owners and veterinary surgeons.

Prevalence of arthritis in cats

Due to the challenges of diagnosing arthritis in cats, it can be difficult to tell how many cats are affected. However, recent studies looking at radiographs of older cats produced startling results indicating that 90% of cats over 12 years of age had evidence of degenerative joint disease. Studies indicate that arthritis is very



common in cats, that it is much more common (and more severe) in older cats, and that the shoulders, hips, elbows, knees and ankles are the most commonly affected joints.

What causes arthritis in cats?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a complicated type of arthritis in which the normal cartilage that cushions the joint degenerates and is worn away, resulting in inflammation, discomfort, ongoing damage and secondary changes in and around the joint. OA can be primary (without an obvious underlying cause, where the disease may arise at least in part due to mechanical 'wear and tear' in the joints) or secondary to a joint injury or abnormality. The other major form of arthritis seen in humans is rheumatoid arthritis, which is (at least in part) an auto-immune disease.

At present it is not entirely clear what causes arthritis in cats. Further studies are needed to determine if this is similar to OA in humans, where mechanical damage to the joints may be pivotal in development of the disease, or whether other factors are involved. At present, most cats with arthritis do not appear to have an obvious predisposing cause.

What are the signs of arthritis in cats?

Cats are masters of hiding discomfort and pain, so often do not demonstrate obvious signs that you might expect. They restrict their own activity to minimise the use of the sore joints and so tend not to show the same signs of arthritis as other animals. In particular, cats uncommonly show overt signs of limping or pain associated with arthritis.

Major signs of arthritis in cats associated with arthritis are:

Reduced mobility

- Reluctance, hesitance or refusal to jump up or down
- Jumping up to lower surfaces than previously
- Jumping up or down less frequently
- Difficulty going up or down stairs
- Stiffness in the legs, especially after sleeping or resting for a while; occasionally there may be obvious lameness
- Difficulty using the litter tray
- Difficulty going through the cat flap

Reduced activity

- Increased time spent resting or sleeping
- Not hunting or exploring the outdoor environment as frequently
- Sleeping in different, easier to access sites
- Reduced interaction and playing less with people or other animals

Altered grooming

- Reduced frequency of time spent grooming
- Matted and scruffy coat
- Sometimes over-grooming of painful joints
- Overgrown claws due to lack of activity and reduced sharpening of claws



Temperament changes

- More irritable or grumpy when handled or stroked
- More irritable or grumpy on contact with other animals
- Spending more time alone
- Avoiding interaction with people and/or animals

Source: <http://licatcare.org/advice/cat-health/arthritis-and-degenerative-joint-disease-cats>

If you know or suspect that your cat may be suffering from painful joints, call us on 9524 6644 and make an appointment to see your vet today!

HOW TO COOL YOUR DOG'S PAINFUL HOT SPOTS

In the morning you notice a red spot on your dog the size of a 5 cent piece. By the time you get off work or come home from picking up the kids from school, the spot is the size of a 50 cent piece. More than likely your pet has what's commonly referred to as a "hot spot", which is a painful circle of inflammation more insantly irritating than a flea bite.

We urge you to take a pet with a hotspot to see the veterinarian, because they can quickly become fast and furious. They make pets absolutely miserable, they can become infected with resistant bacteria, and your veterinarian has products that can treat current hotspots and prevent new ones from forming.

We know that sometimes life interferes with our best intentions, so while you're waiting for that vet appointment, here are a few things you can do at home to soothe your pet's itchy bald spot.

Trim. It's helpful to trim the hair around the area so that it's easier to treat.

Clean. If the spot is only moderately tender, you can clean it with a mild antibacterial soap or mild soap your children use as a face wash for acne.

Compress. To ease discomfort and help with cleaning, apply a soothing compress to the hot spot several times a day. The compress can also help loosen crusty areas so that you can gently wipe them away. You can use a compress with cold black or green tea that was brewed strong. Tea contains tannic acid, which helps dry the wound and helps the wound to heal.

Stop the itch and discomfort. You can apply a thin layer of hydrocortisone cream, Use 1 percent and apply it twice daily. Although the medication is absorbed quickly, you might have to prevent your dog from licking it off for 5 minutes. NOTE: if they lick it's not going to hurt them (unless it's very large amount).

Lay it on thick. Vitamin E is a great way to sooth irritated skin. Just puncture the capsule with a push pin or safety pin and squirt the contents on the wound. Another good choice is the old standby, aloe vera.

Remember, while the tips above can sooth any itchy skin, you have to find the source of the problem (flea bites, food or environmental allergies) and get rid of it to help the pet heal or prevent recurrences.



EIGHT REASONS TO ADOPT A SENIOR DOG

No dog wants to end up homeless — after all, sitting in a cage at a pound is hardly anyone’s idea of a good time. Tragically, the dogs who wait the longest to be chosen are often the ones with the least time to waste. Next time you think of extending your canine family, here are a few reasons why you should consider sharing your life with a senior dog:

1

Because there’s still a puppy in there somewhere



Sure, an older dog might be a little slower than the young whippersnappers but even the most elderly dog will have ‘puppy moments’ — expressions of fun-loving play that are so joyful, they will make anyone see right past the grey hairs!



2

Because they’re the last to be chosen

Adoption fees for older dogs are often significantly reduced, because these dogs wait so long to find homes. You can use the money you save to splurge on some great new dog toys to help welcome your new friend into your home (and encourage the puppy within!)

3

Because the hard work is often already done for you



Most older dogs are already house-trained, know

4



Because old dogs don’t belong in a pound

Older dogs can become easily disorientated & anxious in pounds/shelters. Tragically, many older dogs have ended up there after their elderly best friend has passed away or moved to a nursing home - meaning these dogs haven’t only lost their homes, but will be suffering from the heartbreak of losing their best - & sometimes only - friend.

5

Because they’re often more interested in cuddles than heaps of exercise



So if you lead a pretty relaxed lifestyle, a senior dog could make the perfect companion to share snuggles on the couch with!

6



Because they’re friendship experts

After all their years of being ‘man’s best friend’, older dogs have pretty much nailed the art of friendship — all they need now is an actual friend!

7



Because old dogs CAN learn new tricks

They will have developed unique personalities and come with all the wisdom that a long life brings — but this doesn’t mean that they won’t adapt to a loving new home, and be eager to interact with their new best friends. A senior dog will be just as happy to show off how clever they are with proper training — just throw in an extra dash of patience and TLC (treats help too).

8



Because the only thing an older dog wants is someone to love them

... and they will gratefully return the favour. Senior dogs are seriously experienced in the art of companionship. Senior dogs are tragically often the last to be chosen — and the first to be euthanised. By temporarily fostering or permanently adopting an older dog, you will not only be enriching your life — but you will be giving an old dog the chance to enjoy their golden years as all oldies should.

Source: <http://www.animalsaustralia.org/features/adopt-a-senior-dog.php>

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Nambeelup



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