



## Arthritis

Arthritis is a very common disease in both dogs and cats which can have a serious impact on their quality of life. The disease can be a degenerative age-related process or it can be secondary to poor joint conformation or previous injuries. As a result animals of any age can suffer from arthritis. Arthritis is not specific to any particular breed or size of animal.

A dog which is suffering from arthritis may show some of the following symptoms:

- Reluctance to exercise or more quick to tire during exercise
- Limping or stiffness first thing in the morning or shortly after exercise
- Difficulty sitting or lying down or difficulty rising
- Increased time spent sleeping or lying around
- Change in stance or movement patterns

As cats tend to be more sedentary animals detecting arthritis in them can be more difficult. The most common symptoms include reluctance to jump up to higher surfaces and an attempt to brace their landing when jumping down from a height.

Fortunately, there are a number of things which we can do to help make our pets more comfortable in the face of this progressive disease. **WET** therapy describes the most common approach to managing arthritis:

**W = weight** It is imperative that an arthritic patient's weight is appropriate. Overweight animals have increased strain on their diseased joints which makes them more uncomfortable and contributes to progression of disease. If your pet is overweight please talk to us about initiating an appropriate weight loss program.

**E = exercise** Regular exercise is imperative for arthritic patients. Decide on how much exercise you are realistically able to provide for your pet on a daily basis and stick to it. It needs to be the same EVERY day. Allowing your pet to sit around all week and then giving them a giant run on the weekends is very stressful for their joints.

**T = treatment** There are a number of treatment options which are available to pets with arthritis depending on the specifics of their disease. . The most common options include:

- Fish oil capsules
- Vitamin E
- Glucosamine
- Hills 'j/d' (Joint Diet) biscuits and tinned food
- Cartrophen injections
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
- Surgery

As each of these treatment options is very patient-specific, please ask us about which treatments would be most effective for your pet and we can provide you with a tailored set of recommendations specific for your four-legged friend.

If you have any other questions or concerns about this disease or your pet's health in general, please speak to one of our friendly staff members.