



## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



### 1. SIGNS YOUR CAT OR DOG MAY BE SUFFERING FROM ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is one of the most common ailments seen in middle-aged to older pets. Even younger dogs and cats, under the right circumstances, can suffer from arthritic changes.

### 2. LYMPHOMA IN DOGS

Malignant lymphoma or lymphosarcoma is one of the most common neoplasms (tumor) in dogs. Lymphoma is generally seen in middle aged to older dogs (median age, 6-9 years). Some breeds are believed to have a higher incidence of lymphoma, including Boxers, Bull Mastiffs and Bull dogs.

### 3. SEPARATION ANXIETY IN DOGS

"What can I do if my dog is anxious when I'm not at home", is one of the most common complaints of pet parents. Separation anxiety is one of the most common behavior issues pet parents encounter with their dogs.

## SIGNS YOUR CAT OR DOG MAY BE SUFFERING FROM ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is one of the most common ailments seen in middle-aged to older pets. Even younger dogs and cats, under the right circumstances, can suffer from arthritic changes. Arthritis causes changes within the affected joints that are painful for the affected pet. This pain is responsible for many of the signs associated with arthritis. Here are seven of those common signs.

**1. Limping:** You may see your pet limping or favoring one or more of his legs, depending on which legs and which joints are arthritic. In some cases, the limp may seem worse when your pet first rises and become less noticeable as your pet "warms up" by moving around.

**2. Difficulty Moving:** Your pet may also become reluctant to do things that were previously easy for him to accomplish. For instance, your dog may find it difficult to get into and out of the car or may have difficulty going up and down stairs that were previously easily manageable. Arthritic cats, on the other hand, may stop jumping onto countertops, perches and other high areas because of the pain and discomfort.

**3. Spinal Issues :** Arthritic changes can occur not only in the legs but also in the various parts of the spine. These changes may result in a sore neck, an abnormal posture with a "hunch" in the back, or lameness of one or both hind legs.

**4. Tiredness:** Your pet may tire more easily. For dogs, this may mean that walks become shorter and more painful for your pet. Your

pet may spend more time sleeping and/or resting.

**5. Irritability:** Arthritic animals may become irritable. They may snap and/or bite when approached or handled, particularly if the petting or handling takes place in a manner that increases their pain.

**6. Muscle Atrophy:** Arthritic pets often develop muscle atrophy or loss of the muscle tissue due to inactivity and decreased use of the muscles. A pet with atrophied muscles in their legs will have a leg which looks thinner than a normal leg.

**7. Licking, Chewing & Biting:** Pets affected with arthritis may also begin to lick at, chew or bite at body areas that are painful. This may even reach the point of causing inflamed skin and hair loss over affected areas.

Though arthritis cannot be cured, there are various remedies and procedures that can help ease the pain for your pet. Consult your veterinarian for advice if you believe your dog or cat is suffering from arthritis.

Arthritis in cats can be particularly hard to spot. Many arthritic cats simply become less active. Often, this change in behavior corresponds to the cat becoming older and a cat owner may simply assume that the change is normal when, in fact, your cat may actually be decreasing his activity level because he is in pain due to arthritis.

**Source:** <http://www.petmd.com/dog/slideshows/care/7-signs-of-arthritis-in-dogs-cats>





## LYMPHOMA IN DOGS

Lymphoma in dogs is a common cancer of lymphocytes and is generally seen in middle aged to older dogs (median age, 6-9 years). Between 15% and 20% of malignant tumors in dogs are lymphomas. Lymphomas can occur in the lymph nodes, spleen, liver, and other organs. Treatment with chemotherapy has been very successful, adding months and occasionally years to the dog's life.

### What Causes Lymphoma?

Although several possible causes such as viruses, bacteria, chemical exposure, and physical factors such as strong magnetic fields have been investigated, the cause of this cancer remains unknown. Suppression of the immune system is a known risk factor for the development of lymphoma in humans.

### Is a Dog With Lymphoma in Pain?

The lymph nodes are large but may or may not be painful. However, some patients become ill as a consequence of the disease. Signs might include vomiting, weight loss, diarrhea, lethargy, appetite loss, increased thirst, weakness, abnormal behavior, or difficult breathing.

### Is Lymphoma Cancer Hereditary in Dogs?

Lymphoma is one of the most common malignant tumors to occur in dogs. The cause is genetic, but there are also suspected environmental factors involved.

### Is Lymphoma in Dogs Curable?

Lymphoma in dogs is a common cancer of lymphocytes. Between 15% and 20% of malignant tumors in dogs are lymphomas. Lymphomas can occur in the lymph nodes, spleen, liver, and other organs. The cancer can be aggressive.

### Canine Lymphoma Life Expectancy

Of all the types of dog cancers dogs, Canine Lymphoma is among the MOST treatable by far using conventional methods, and dogs



with Canine Lymphoma generally have much better life expectancies than dogs of other types of cancer treated by the same conventional methods. So dogs with Canine Lymphoma are lucky in that respect.

Unfortunately, however, with current treatments, Canine Lymphoma is generally not a curable disease.

There is no conventional Canine Lymphoma treatment that has any significant chance for cure. The aim is to prolong life. Hopefully that may change with additional research and progress in the future.

And always remember that statistics like those given on this page, while useful, can never accurately predict how any individual dog will actually do with or without any specific treatment. Thus it's impossible for anyone to predict how long YOUR specific dog will live.

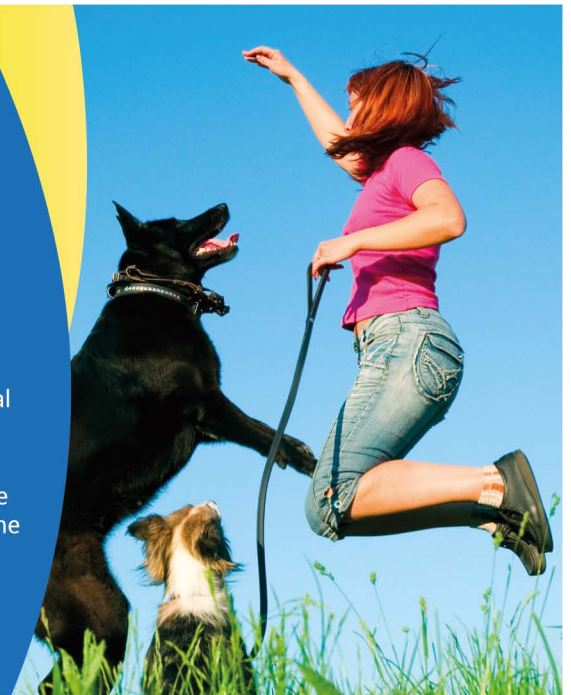
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## HEALTHY JOINTS - HAPPY PETS

### 5 Key Principles for Managing Osteoarthritis

New research has identified 5 key principles to help manage osteoarthritis in dogs and cats:

- 1 Weight-loss:** It is important to aim to maintain an ideal body weight.
- 2 Cartrophen injections** can provide effective relief from pain, stiffness and lameness. Speak to your vet about this.
- 3 Diet:** Use a specific mobility diet like Hill's j/d or Metabolic + j/d for your pet. Call to speak with Meg or Georgia – our qualified veterinary nurses with a special interest in pet nutrition.
- 4 Use of NSAIDs:** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, help reduce swelling, stiffness & joint pain. They can bring relief to a dog with arthritis, or one who has just had surgery. Your vet will be able to assist in determining what is the best for your pet.
- 5 Therapeutic exercise:** For a pet with arthritis, regular daily exercise is paramount to help maintain muscle strength and keep the joints well lubricated. Speak to your vet about the options which may be available.



For more information, call us on 9524 6644



# SEPARATION ANXIETY IN DOGS

“What can I do if my dog is anxious when I’m not at home”, is one of the most common complaints of pet parents is that their dogs are disruptive or destructive when left alone. Their dogs might urinate, defecate, bark, howl, chew, dig or try to escape. Although these problems often indicate that a dog needs to be taught polite house manners, they can also be symptoms of distress. When a dog’s problems are accompanied by other distress behaviors, such as drooling and showing anxiety when his pet parents prepare to leave the house, they aren’t evidence that the dog isn’t house trained or doesn’t know which toys are his to chew. Instead, they are indications that the dog has separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is triggered when dogs become upset because of separation from their guardians, the people they’re attached to. Escape attempts by dogs with separation anxiety are often extreme and can result in self-injury and household destruction, especially around exit points like windows and doors.

Some dogs suffering from separation anxiety become agitated when their guardians prepare to leave. Others seem anxious or depressed prior to their guardians’ departure or when their guardians aren’t present. Some try to prevent their guardians from leaving. Usually, right after a guardian leaves a dog with separation anxiety, the dog will begin barking and displaying other distress behaviors within a short time after being left alone—often within minutes. When the guardian returns home, the dog acts as though it’s been years since he’s seen his mum or dad!

When treating a dog with separation anxiety, the goal is to resolve the dog’s underlying anxiety by teaching him to enjoy, or at least tolerate, being left alone. This is accomplished by setting things up so that the dog experiences the situation that provokes his anxiety, namely being alone, without experiencing fear or anxiety.



## What to Do If Your Dog Has Separation Anxiety

**Treatment for Mild Separation Anxiety.** If your dog has a mild case of separation anxiety, counterconditioning might reduce or resolve the problem. Counterconditioning is a treatment process that changes an animal’s fearful, anxious or aggressive reaction to a pleasant, relaxed one instead. It’s done by associating the sight or presence of a feared or disliked person, animal, place, object or situation with something really good, something the dog loves. Over time, the dog learns that whatever he fears actually predicts good things for him. For dogs with separation anxiety, counterconditioning focuses on developing an association between being alone and good things, like delicious food. To develop this kind of association, every time you leave the house, you can offer your dog a puzzle toy stuffed with food that will take him at least 20 to 30 minutes to finish.

**Treatment for Moderate to Severe Separation Anxiety.** Moderate or severe cases of separation anxiety require a more complex desensitisation and counterconditioning program. In these cases, it’s crucial to gradually accustom a dog to being alone by starting with many short separations that do not produce anxiety and then gradually increasing the duration of the separations over many weeks of daily sessions.

**Step One: Pre-departure Cues.** One treatment approach to this pre-departure anxiety is to teach your dog that when you pick up your keys or put on your coat, it doesn’t always mean that you’re leaving. You can do this by exposing your dog to these cues in various orders several times a day—without leaving. After your dog doesn’t become anxious when he sees you getting ready to leave, you can move on to the next step below.

**Step Two: Graduated Departures/Absences.** If your dog is less anxious before you leave, you can probably skip the pre-departure treatment above and start with very short departures. The main rule is to plan your absences to be shorter than the time it takes for your dog to become upset. To get started, train your dog to perform out-of-sight stays by an inside door in the home, such as the bathroom. You can teach your dog to sit or down and stay while you go to the other side of the bathroom door. Gradually increase the length of time you wait on the other side of the door, out of your dog’s sight. You can also work on getting your dog used to pre-departure cues as you practice the stay. For example, ask your dog to stay. Then put on your coat, pick up your purse and go into the bathroom while your dog continues to stay.

**A Necessary Component of Separation Anxiety Treatment.** During desensitisation to any type of fear, it is essential to ensure that your dog never experiences the full-blown version of whatever provokes his anxiety or fear. He must experience only a low-intensity version that doesn’t frighten him. Otherwise, he won’t learn to feel calm and comfortable in situations that upset him. This means that during treatment for separation anxiety, your dog cannot be left alone except during your desensitisation sessions. Fortunately there are plenty of alternative arrangements:

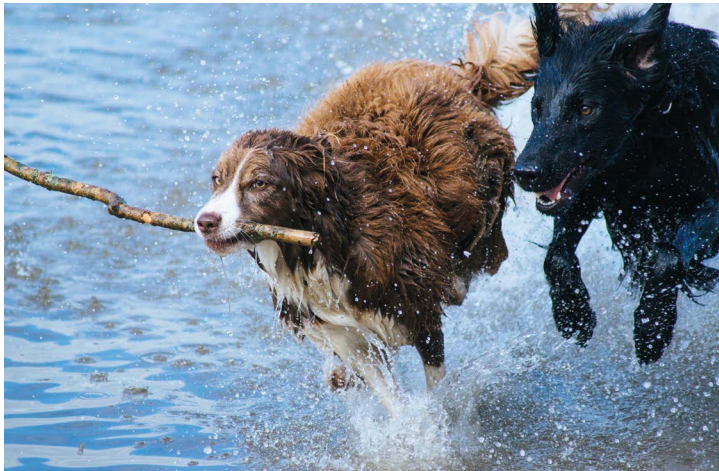
- If possible, take your dog to work with you.
- Arrange for a family member, friend or dog sitter to come to your home and stay with your dog when you’re not there. (Most dogs suffering from separation anxiety are fine as long as someone is with them. That someone doesn’t necessarily need to be you.)
- Take your dog to a sitter’s house or to a doggy daycare.

**To Crate or Not to Crate?** Crate training can be helpful for some dogs if they learn that the crate is their safe place to go when left alone. However, for other dogs, the crate can cause added stress and anxiety. In order to determine whether or not you should try using a crate, monitor your dog’s behavior during crate training and when he’s left in the crate while you’re home. If he shows signs of distress (heavy panting, excessive salivation, frantic escape attempts, persistent howling or barking), crate confinement isn’t the best option for him. Instead of using a crate, you can try confining your dog to one room behind a baby gate.

**Provide Plenty of “Jobs” for Your Dog to Do.** Providing lots of physical and mental stimulation is a vital part of treating many behavior problems, especially those involving anxiety. Exercising your dog’s mind and body can greatly enrich his life, decrease stress and provide appropriate outlets for normal dog behaviors. Additionally, a physically and mentally tired dog doesn’t have much excess energy to expend when he’s left alone. To keep your dog busy and happy, try the following suggestions:



- Give your dog at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity (for example, running and swimming) every day. Try to exercise your dog right before you have to leave him by himself. This might help him relax and rest while you're gone.
- If your dog likes other dogs, let him play off-leash with his canine buddies.



- Play fun, interactive games with your dog, such as fetch and tug-of-war.
- Take your dog on daily walks and outings. Take different routes and visit new places as often as possible so that he can experience novel smells and sights.
- Frequently provide food puzzle toys. You can feed your dog his meals in these toys or stuff them with a little peanut butter, cheese or yogurt. Also give your dog a variety of attractive edible and inedible chew

things. Puzzle toys and chew items encourage chewing and licking, which have been shown to have a calming effect on dogs. Be sure to provide them whenever you leave your dog alone.

- Make your dog "hunt" his meals by hiding small piles of his kibble around your house or yard when you leave. Most dogs love this game!
- Enroll in a reward-based training class to increase your dog's mental activity and enhance the bond between you and your dog. Get involved in dog sports, such as agility, freestyle (dancing with your dog) or flyball.

### Medications Might Help.

Always consult with your veterinarian or a veterinary behaviorist before giving your dog any type of medication for a behavior problem.

The use of medications can be very helpful, especially for severe cases of separation anxiety. Some dogs are so distraught by any separation from their pet parents that treatment can't be implemented without the help of medication. Anti-anxiety medication can help a dog tolerate some level of isolation without experiencing anxiety. It can also make treatment progress more quickly.

If you'd like to explore this option, speak with your veterinarian, a veterinary behaviorist or a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist who can work closely with your vet.

### What NOT to Do

Do not scold or punish your dog. Anxious behaviors are not the result of disobedience or spite. They are distress responses! Your dog displays anxious behaviors when left alone because he's upset and trying to cope with a great deal of stress. If you punish him, he may become even more upset and the problem could get much worse.

*Source: <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/separation-anxiety>*

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