

Arthritis



What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a complex condition; it involves inflammation and degeneration of one or multiple joints. It is a progressive condition so your dog may become more stiff over time.

In a healthy joint the surfaces of the bones within the joint are smooth and they glide over each other easily, when a dog develops arthritis the joint becomes uneven and the surface becomes rough. This leads to inflammation and pain within the joints. Over time this can also lead to additional formation of new bone.

What causes arthritis?

There are generally multiple factors that contribute to the development of arthritis. Some of these include the following

- Genetics - some breeds are predisposed to developing arthritis
- Injuries - if an animal has for example had a fracture or experienced ligament damage in the past, this can affect the joint later in life and lead to development of arthritis in the affected joints.
- Joint development - conditions such as elbow dysplasia or patellar luxation can lead to development of arthritis further down the line.
- Arthritis can also develop in a dog with no predisposing factors, due to ageing and wear and tear on the joints.

How can I manage my dog's arthritis?

Multimodal management of arthritis is generally the best possible approach to manage arthritis; this means the use of multiple different treatment options which can be prescribed by your vet. Always discuss this with your own vet.

- Analgesia (pain relief) there are a variety of drugs that can be used to manage the pain associated with arthritis that your vet may discuss with you. Never give any drug or medication to your pet before discussing with your vet.
- Nutraceuticals - this is the use of a nutritional supplement which can help support joint health. Please speak to your vet about the options which may be suitable for your pet.
- Physiotherapy. As with people, animals can also benefit from massage, hydrotherapy, and acupuncture. Some veterinary practices can offer this or will be able to refer you to a specialist.
- Changes you can make at home include providing lots of soft, padded bedding, keeping your dog warm, raising water bowls and food bowls, putting matting on the ground if you have any areas where the floor may be slippery. Continue regular, short intervals of exercise if your dog is happy to do so and unless otherwise directed by your vet.

This advice is for UK pets only. This information should be used a reference point only, it is important to always seek the advice of a veterinary surgeon before administering any medication or diagnosing your pet's condition.