

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis – or degenerative joint disease- is commonly diagnosed in dogs. It can reduce a pet's mobility and cause moderate to significant discomfort. There are numerous causes or factors that may contribute to osteoarthritis, including pre-existing joint instability or developmental disease, obesity, genetics, exercise, and age. While osteoarthritis tends to be a chronic and progressive disease process, there are many treatment modalities that may significantly improve- or extend the duration of- your pet's mobility and overall comfort level.

Maintaining an ideal body weight helps to reduce stress and ongoing damage to your pet's joints. In addition to assisting with weight loss if needed, low-impact exercises and physical rehabilitation can improve joint function and mobility. Medications and supplements for osteoarthritis include non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, alternative pain medications, glucosamine and chondroitin supplements, and omega-3 fatty acids. Occasionally, surgery or joint injections can be performed to address an underlying joint issue and/or lessen ongoing damage to the joint.

Your primary care veterinarian can help you to establish a long-term management plan for your dog's osteoarthritis. You can also consider a consultation with a veterinary surgeon or veterinary physical rehabilitation specialist for additional information.