

Has your Pet Been Diagnosed with Osteoarthritis?

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Arms of Aloha - Hospice and Pain Management for Pets

Also referred to as degenerative joint disease (DJD), arthritis is a very common condition of older pets. Arthritis can cause significant pain, discomfort and loss of function. The signs can be very subtle, but you, as the caregiver, are the best person to recognize them. The good news is that there are many different treatments that we can try to make your pet more comfortable and happy. These are divided into several broad categories:

1. Anti-inflammatory drugs
2. Other pain medications
3. Nutritional support and supplements
4. Physical therapy
5. Integrative medicine
6. Exercise and weight management
7. Environmental modification

The best treatment plans incorporate two or more of the above types of therapy. The plan is tailored to the individual pet, and often it takes trial and error to see what works best. Patience is key! Please also keep in mind that arthritis is a progressive condition - while we can try to slow down the process, we cannot stop or reverse it. Your pet's signs will probably change over time, and treatments that were helpful in the past may not be enough. Fortunately, we can keep adjusting the plan to see what works.

Perhaps the most important thing we can do for our aging pets is to keep finding small ways to bring them a little happiness. Special toys, treats (in moderation!), or even some quiet time together can make a big difference. Creativity is valuable when working with a pet who has lost mobility. For example, a dog that can no longer enjoy daily walks with the family might benefit from a car ride or even a cruise around the neighborhood in a wagon.

Work with your veterinarian to develop a treatment plan that makes sense for you and your pet. You'll both be happy you did.