



## **What is 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 inflammation occurs when the smooth cartilage surfaces within the joints become damaged and no longer allow 'frictionless' joint motion. This pain is responsible for many of the signs associated with arthritis.

### ***"How do I know if my pet has arthritis?"***

Arthritis, and other causes of joint pain, can present themselves in subtle ways. Being generally quiet and lethargic and loss of enthusiasm for exercise, can all be early indicators that your pet may be suffering arthritis. If, and when, the arthritis becomes worse, your pet may;

- suffer pain or discomfort when getting up or lying down
- find jumping up on to elevated surfaces difficult
- be reluctant to climb stairs
- be stiffer in the mornings, especially cold mornings, but then get better throughout the day

Arthritis is more likely if your pet is over-weight, getting older or has a history of joint damage or surgery.

### ***"What can I do about my pet's arthritis?"***

There are three main factors to consider when approaching the treatment of arthritis;

1. relieving the pain and reducing the inflammation
2. stimulation and repair of damaged cartilage
3. weight control

Arthritis is a painful, inflammatory condition that can be very distressing for you and your pet. The use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (like Previcox, Metacam, Rimadyl™, etc) can immediately reduce the pain and begin the process of combating the inflammation.

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Instead of just medicating for the pain, in many cases we will also recommend the use of agents that will improve the physical structure of the damaged cartilage. By using Cartrophen™ or Zydax™ you can actually repair the damaged cartilage, slow down its rate of decline and improve joint lubrication.

Both of these courses of treatment, whether used alone or jointly, should always be undertaken in conjunction with strict weight control. Any excess weight that your pet is carrying around will greatly compound the pain of arthritic joints.

***Arthritis is a very common condition and can be very painful. The good news is that, with recent advancements in medication and nutrition, getting older no longer has to be a painful process.***

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