

# What is Osteoarthritis (OA)?

Osteoarthritis is a progressive disease. Being proactive about pain will give your pet a better quality of life whilst also helping protect their joints.

**OA is inflammation of the bones and joints, and results in pain or discomfort. As well as signalling a deterioration of the joint, pain associated with arthritis may:**

- + Stop your pet doing what they enjoy.
- + Interfere with the quality time you spend with your pet.
- + Prevent your pet from being active.
- + Change the way your pet walks, runs, and bears weight.

If you notice symptoms in your pet which may relate to OA, it is important to initially confirm this diagnosis with your Vet. They will then provide important advice and treatment decisions to proactively managing OA and your pet's long term health.



## **Pets are living longer lives than ever before.**

While this allows us to spend more quality time with our furry family, it also leaves us with extra responsibility to ensure they live comfortably in their senior years.



Fur Life Vet provides health and wellbeing information for you to help care for your pets throughout their lives.

  
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# Arthritis

Ensure your pet's senior years are comfortable and pain free



# How your Vet can help

There are several important areas where your vet can help.

## Diagnose the source of your pet's symptoms.

- + Provide pain relief to ensure your animal is comfortable.
- + Help protect against the progression of disease.
- + Give advice on making your house comfortable for your pet. This may involve a soft dog bed, litter trays in accessible places for cats, or ramps for animals that are having trouble jumping to their favourite spots.
- + Give advice on rest, exercise and physiotherapy for your pet.
- + Help you manage your pet's weight. Often this can be the single most important long term measure you can change.



Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are one of many options used to manage the pain associated with OA.



- + Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, are medications that provide pain relief, anti-inflammatory effect, and protection against deterioration of joints. If your pet is suffering from arthritis, your Vet may prescribe NSAIDs to help alleviate your pet's pain.
- + As with all medications, side effects can occur. If your pet becomes unwell or you suspect your pet is having problems with a medication, STOP the medication and CONTACT your Vet.
- + The most common side effect of NSAID use is a mild softening of your pet's stools. Loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, or other gastrointestinal signs may occasionally be observed.
- + Weight loss, diet modification and neuroceuticals can all play a role in managing osteoarthritis.

## Importance of the revisit

- + To optimise your pet's response whilst minimising the risk of using NSAID medications, it is best to discuss the treatment plan with your Vet to ensure that you know when any revisits or lab tests are needed.
- + Lifestyle and medication needs may change over time. Your Vet will consider the factors that might contribute and change treatment regimes accordingly. This ensures that your pet continues to receive the best care possible.

# Recognise the symptoms

## DOGS

Dogs show pain in many different ways. Often the signs of osteoarthritis develop over a period of time and we might be so accustomed to seeing these behaviours that we accept them as being a normal part of the ageing process.

### Is your dog:

- + Limping?
- + Having trouble rising?
- + Less active?
- + Less tolerant of their joints?
- + Less tolerant of exercise?
- + Detached, irritable, or more dependent than previously?
- + Chewing or licking their joints?

These are all common symptoms of arthritis in dogs. Some dogs may display one or more of these symptoms, however many cases of canine arthritis go undetected. If you've noticed any of these symptoms, a visit to the vet will be the best gift you can give your dog this year.

## CATS

Often osteoarthritis in cats is very subtle, as symptoms may be more behavioural than physical, and can be difficult to identify.

### Is your cat:

- + Reluctant to play or jump?
- + Irritable?
- + Grooming poorly?
- + Inactive?
- + Suffering from swollen joints?
- + Limping?

These are common symptoms in arthritic cats. However, as many cats have a sedentary lifestyle, especially when they get older, it may be difficult to spot that they are in pain. If you notice any of these symptoms, a visit to your Vet will be the best gift you can give your cat this year.