

ARTHRITIS

OSTEOARTHRITIS IS A DEGENERATIVE CONDITION OF CARTILAGE AND BONE. IN ARTHRITIC ANIMALS, THE CARTILAGE IN THE JOINTS BREAKS DOWN FASTER THAN IT CAN REPAIR. THIS AFFECTS THE NORMAL JOINT STABILITY AND LUBRICATION AND CAUSES JOINT PAIN. TYPICAL SIGNS OF ARTHRITIS INCLUDE STIFFNESS AND LAMENESS. SOME DOGS MAY LIMP, OTHERS MAY SHOW ONLY MILD SIGNS OF STIFFNESS AFTER GETTING UP IN THE MORNINGS, OR MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING UP STEPS OR INTO THE CAR.

ARTHRITIS IS A PROGRESSIVE DISEASE WHICH MEANS THAT AS YOUR PET GETS OLDER, THE ARTHRITIS WILL GET WORSE. IT IS ALSO A PAINFUL CONDITION, WHICH IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO HELP ARTHRITIC ANIMALS. THERE IS NO CURE FOR ARTHRITIS; ONCE IT IS PRESENT IT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE. ALTHOUGH THE ARTHRITIS CAN'T BE CURED THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS WE CAN HELP YOUR PET TO RELIEVE ANY PAIN AND SUFFERING.

TYPICALLY WE LOOK AT FIVE WAYS TO HELP:

ANALGESIA THIS IS PAIN RELIEF AND IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR PET TO RELIEVE PAIN AND SUFFERING. WE CAN PROVIDE PAIN RELIEF EITHER WITH ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS OR MORE ALTERNATIVE WAYS SUCH AS ACUPUNCTURE. ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS ARE USUALLY GIVEN DAILY AND ARE USUALLY USED LONG TERM. ACUPUNCTURE WILL WORK IN ABOUT 50% OF DOGS AND WILL TYPICALLY NEED REPEATING MONTHLY.

BODY WEIGHT IF YOUR PET IS OVERWEIGHT WE WILL DISCUSS A WEIGHT REDUCTION DIET BECAUSE BY BEING OVERWEIGHT, EXTRA STRESS IS PLACED ONTO THE DISEASED JOINTS.

COMFORT SOME DOGS BENEFIT GREATLY FROM COMFORTABLE BEDDING AND RAMPS TO ASSIST INTO CAR BOOTS.

DISEASE MODIFICATION ALTHOUGH WE CAN'T CURE ARTHRITIS, SOME SUPPLEMENTS AND DRUGS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO HELP SLOW DOWN DISEASE PROGRESSION. A COURSE OF 4 WEEKLY INJECTIONS CAN HELP IMPROVE CARTILAGE RECOVERY AND REPAIR AND IS SUCCESSFUL IN ABOUT 75% OF DOGS AND WILL TYPICALLY NEED REPEATING TWICE A YEAR. SUPPLEMENTS CAN ALSO BE USED TO HELP CARTILAGE REPAIR: GLUCOSAMINES, CHONDROITINS AND ANTI-OXIDANTS CAN ALL HAVE MARKED BENEFICIAL EFFECTS AND ARE USUALLY GIVEN EVERY DAY. IN SOME DOGS THESE SUPPLEMENTS CAN BE AS HELPFUL AS PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES. NOT ALL JOINT SUPPLEMENTS ARE THE SAME AND THE BEST ONES ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, ALSO THE MOST EXPENSIVE.

EXERCISE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR PET IS KEPT FIT TO HELP WITH WEIGHT CONTROL AND ALSO BECAUSE FIT MUSCLES WILL HELP SUPPORT THE ARTHRITIC JOINTS. HOWEVER, OVER-EXERCISE CAN BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE JOINTS. SHORTER, MORE FREQUENT WALKS ARE PREFERABLE AND LEAD EXERCISE IS PREFERABLE TO RUNNING, JUMPING AND CHASING GAMES. WE CAN WORK OUT AN IDEAL EXERCISE REGIME FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL PET.