

Joint Health

Damage to joints can occur for several reasons, including:

- trauma
- genetics
- old age
- excess weight
- infection
- hip dysplasia
- cranial cruciate ligament rupture

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease that can occur for any of the above reasons, and results in a deterioration of the cartilage within the joint. Cartilage covers the ends of bones and provides a smooth gliding surface when the joint is used. When there is a loss or thinning of the cartilage, the joint space narrows and the surface becomes roughened. This causes pain when the joint is utilized. Signs may include stiffness, reduced activity, lameness, difficulty jumping or climbing stairs, or sensitivity when limbs are touched.

Although there is no cure for osteoarthritis, we are able to manage the disease by reducing the pain, slowing the disease progression, and promoting tissue repair. The following products are some of the options available for the treatment of osteoarthritis.

Veterinary Diets:

Excess weight causes unnecessary stress on joints; therefore, maintaining a lean body weight helps to reduce the impact on the joints. The goal is to maintain lean body mass while losing weight to reach an ideal body condition.

MCRC Weight Control/Mature Diet and MCRC Calorie Control (dry/canned):

Have reduced energy and fat levels for weight loss and weight control. Great way to get the excess weight and strain off the joints.

MCRC Mobility Support Diet (dry):

Has a moderate energy level to prevent weight gain. Is supplemented with Green-Lipped Mussel Powder (GLMP). Clinical studies have shown that GLMP decreases the clinical signs of joint inflammation in dogs.

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs):

Have analgesic (pain relieving) and anti-inflammatory effects.

Metacam: Was developed for dogs and comes in a honey-flavored liquid to administer by mouth or on top of their food.

Deramaxx: Was developed for dogs and comes in flavored chewable tablets.

The following over-the-counter NSAIDs are not recommended for use in cats or dogs due to their serious side effects and possible toxicity.

Aspirin (ASA): Can cause stomach irritation (vomiting/diarrhea), ulceration and can cause degeneration of the joint cartilage.

Tylenol (acetaminophen): Very toxic to cats. Not recommended for dogs due to the low level of safety.

Advil/Motrin (Ibuprofen): Is toxic to dogs and cats, and can cause serious side effects including liver damage.

Nutritional Supplements:

Glucosamine and chondroitin are nutritional supplements that are given orally and infiltrate joint tissues. Both substances help to reduce joint pain and preserve range of motion and mobility. Glucosamine is one of the building blocks of cartilage and chondroitin helps to slow the breakdown of cartilage.

Novo-Flex:

Are chewable tablets for dogs and cats that contain a combination of glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate.

CT-Support:

Is a powdered formula of glucosamine hydrochloride, MSM, amino acids, and a vitamin/mineral supplement. Can be sprinkled on food or in a small amount of water.

Cosequin:

Available in capsule, powder, or chewable tablet formulations that contain a combination of glucosamine hydrochloride, chondroitin sulfate, and manganese ascorbate. Is available in double strength (DS) for dogs over 25lbs, and in regular strength (RS) for smaller dogs and cats. Maintains the structure and slows down the degeneration of the joint cartilage. Numerous published studies on this specific product are available.

Cartrophen Injections:

Cartrophen injections are given under the skin (like a vaccine) once a week for one month, for a total of four injections. In clinical trials, beneficial effects were seen in eighty percent of dogs and lasted at least three months. Effects are usually not seen until the second injection, and may not be seen until after the fourth injection. Some of these beneficial effects include: increased range of motion, weight-bearing on affected limb, and a decrease in visible pain. Cartrophen injections also slow the progression of osteoarthritis.

Please ask the veterinary staff for more information regarding these treatment options.