

ARTHRITIS IN DOGS
LePar Animal Hospital
3811 W 95th Evergreen Park II 60805

Osteoarthritis is very common in dogs. The three big reasons this happens are overfeeding, insufficient exercise, and normal wear and tear. Overfeeding, in theory, is the easiest to prevent.

For the vast majority of dogs we suggest giving a set amount of a grain free food starting at one year of age. Calorie restriction for puppies is very important as well. The statistics on overfeeding are phenomenal. By five years of age, 52% of free-choice fed dogs had arthritis in at least one hip compared to only 13% of calorie restricted dogs. By eight years of age, 91% of free-choice fed dogs have radiographic evidence of arthritis in at least one joint.

For exercise, 10 to 20 minutes of leash walking or other activities daily is helpful. For older, or more severely arthritic dogs, start slowly and gradually work up to a 10 minute walk.

The signs of arthritis can be difficult to detect. The symptoms are often slowness in rising, reluctance to exercise, climb stairs or go for a walk, stiffness or limping. Instinctively most dogs will not whimper or cry when painful. Our physical exam is used to detect abnormalities in any joints which may be arthritic. In addition we may use applied kiniseology to find weakened areas on your pet's body. X-rays are necessary to confirm and determine the severity of arthritis.

The severity of your dog's arthritis will help us determine what treatment is needed. Each dog is different, so if you're not seeing improvements, please call us. Below are some general considerations we will discuss if it is determined that your dog has arthritis.

- 1.) Feeding guidelines:
- 2.) Exercise guidelines:
- 3.) Home massage. Try 10 minutes once or twice daily around the affected area, your dog will love it.

Specific Therapies

- 1.) Glucosamine / Chondroitin Sulfate supplements. These nutrients help the body repair cartilage in damaged joints.
- 2.) Omega-3 fatty acids. This supplement acts as a mild anti-inflammatory. For this treatment you have a few options. Welactin and Ultra EFA are convenient pour on liquids we carry.
- 3.) Anti-inflammatories. Long term usage of this medication may require annual lab work to monitor your pet's health.
- 4.) Homeopathic remedies.
- 6.) Adequan and/or Pentosan natural anti-inflammatory injections are initially given once or twice weekly. Long term, most dogs can be weaned down to one injection per month.
- 7.) Acupuncture / Chiropractic treatments. Return in _____ days for the next treatment. A minimum of three treatments is initially recommended.

- 8.) Rehabilitation services: Underwater Treadmill, Laser Therapy, Massage & Reiki, Ultrasound, Exercise Therapy. Please schedule your first appointment here to start therapies at Chicago Animal Rehab in Chicago Ridge.

- 9.) Nutrition Response Testing uses acupressure points to design a clinical nutrition plan for your pet. Please schedule your first appointment with Dr. Cutright.