

# Osteoarthritis

## What is it?

Osteoarthritis is a painful condition of the joints, which is more common among cats than we think. 92% of cats over the age of 20 and 60% of cats over the age of 6 have been found to suffer from osteoarthritis.

This condition involves inflammation of the joints and slow destruction of the cartilage tissue, which is supportive elastic tissue surrounding the joints. This leads to the painful rubbing of bones against each other, causing discomfort.

## What are the signs?

will be included as part of the plan. This means that signs of this condition can be picked up and managed sooner to help keep your cat live pain free.

### Things to look out for are:

- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in toileting habits
- Changes in general demeanour
- Reduction in jumping
- Lack of grooming
- Lameness - can be intermittent and changing in severity or limb

Often, the clinical signs of osteoarthritis are associated with aging cats. However, osteoarthritis is something that we can treat and make a huge difference to aging cats' quality of life when treated.



## How is it diagnosed?

Osteoarthritis can be diagnosed from radiographs, alongside a thorough clinical exam, as often the symptoms may be more indicative of the condition than radiographs alone.

## How is it treated?

Osteoarthritis is a progressive degenerative condition, which means that as your cat ages, it will worsen, so your vet may recommend additional medication and therapies.

Your vet may prescribe medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatories to help reduce the inflammation around the joint and reduce pain.

A further form of pain relief your vet may mention is gabapentin, which reduces pain signals getting to the brain. Additionally, it can help reduce stress in the nervous older cat. This is available in flavoured tablets or liquid.

There is also a monthly injection which may be appropriate for your cat which can provide pain relief in cats with osteoarthritis.

## Aids in relieving stiffness, supporting the joints and promoting mobility:

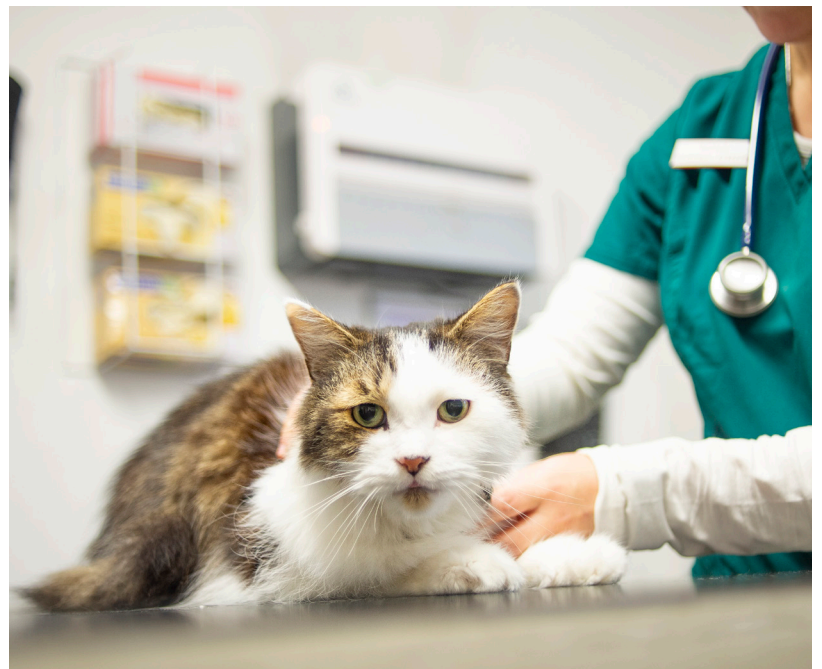
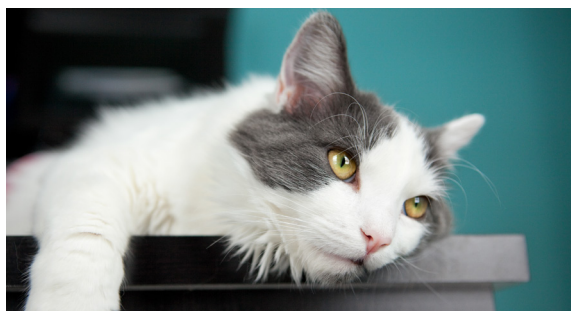
- Joint Supplements – these help to reduce inflammation and help to improve cartilage
- Flexadin – this medication helps to support the body's own anti-inflammatory response to osteoarthritis

## Environmental Changes:

- Weight Loss – diet clinics are available with our registered veterinary nurses
- Low sided litter tray – or different litter substrate
- Raised food bowls – to help reduce strain in the neck and back
- Anti-slip surfaces – to promote confidence when walking and prevent injury
- Ramps up to beds – allows opportunity to sit at a raised point
- Warm padded beds – keeping arthritic joints warm can help to provide pain relief

## Alternative Therapies:

- Physiotherapy – massage, remedial exercise and heat therapy to encourage a better range of motion in the joints, improving flexibility and muscle strength
- Laser Therapy – provides energy to the joints to reduce inflammation and encourage healing and to provide pain relief



## What does this mean for my cat?

Although the news of your cat having osteoarthritis may be overwhelming, cats with this condition can live a good quality life if the condition is managed.

Monitoring clinical signs can help give an indication for the progression of the disease and this can be monitored with help from our nurse clinics.

Regular blood tests may also be recommended, if your cat is on certain medications, in order to assess organ function and provide the most suitable option for your cat.

The Pet Plus Membership is perfect for older pets as this monitoring will be included as part of the plan. This means that signs of this condition can be picked up and managed sooner to help keep your cat live pain free.



### Lime Trees Cat Clinic

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**If you are worried about your cat's health, or want to discuss treatment options, give us a call to make an appointment.**