



Arthritis - is your pet affected?

Anyone with arthritis knows that chills get in their joints, and the same is true for our pets. With 80% of older dogs and cats suffering with arthritis, it is important that as pet owners we know the signs to look out for when problems arise.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are the ones permitting free limb movements – called synovial joints (see diagram right). Arthritis develops when the articular cartilage becomes pitted and cracked. These changes are commonly due to age related wear and tear, but can also be secondary to joint trauma and also conformational joint issues such as hip dysplasia.

So what are the signs of arthritis? These often include sleeping more, plus for dogs – difficulty in getting up after rest, slowing down on walks and a reluctance to jump into the car. Cats may take extra time or effort to jump up onto surfaces, or show signs of toileting issues such as incontinence or missing a litter tray.

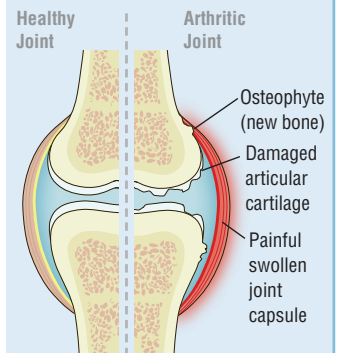


Arthritis is usually diagnosed on a combination of clinical examination (examining the joints for swelling, thickening, pain and range of movement), plus a history suggestive of changes compatible with the disease. X-rays can also be helpful, confirming the degree of bone changes.

Although arthritis cannot be cured, most pets will benefit from a wide range of treatment options. A key consideration is **weight loss** for any pets carrying excess weight, as this hugely impacts on the joints. Many pets also benefit from **anti-inflammatory medication** to reduce the soreness and pain. **Dietary supplements** (such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate) are often beneficial. K Laser therapy can assist in pain management and reduced swelling (see article below). Many arthritic pets struggle with long **walks**, so little and often is the key.

So – if your pet is showing any signs of arthritis – please come and see us for a check-up!

Understanding arthritis:

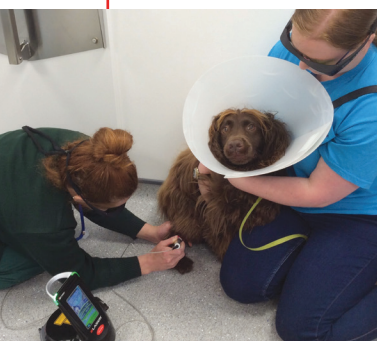


Healthy Joint: The ends of the bones are covered by smooth articular cartilage and the joints are lubricated by synovial fluid, achieving pain free movement.

Arthritic Joint: The protective cartilage is damaged and worn away, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone causing pain and inflammation.

Dog photo: Warren Photographics

Why not sign up to text and email reminders for vaccinations - it's FREE!!!



K LASER®

What is K Laser?

Laser therapy uses different wavelengths, power and frequency of laser light (called photobiomodulation) which are absorbed into the damaged area, increasing local circulation and drawing oxygen and nutrients to encourage healing.

How could K Laser help your pet?

It's effects include reduced inflammation, swelling, muscle spasms, stiffness & pain reduction along with improved healing times. And can be used to treat Arthritis, wound healing, damaged tendons, neck and back pain, lameness, sprains & strains, ruptured cruciate, aural haematomas, surgery wounds and many other ailments.

Will my pet have to be admitted/sedated?

This procedure can be carried out by one of the nursing team at appointments throughout the day to suit you and your pet.

The procedure is drug free, pain free, non-invasive, no sedation/restraint is needed. The treatment times can vary in length depending on the areas that would be treated. Often improvements can be seen after just one session, however the Laser treatment is cumulative in nature so for most conditions repeat treatments give greater benefits. Your pets' treatment plan will be discussed with you and this can be adjusted as your pet responds. You are welcome to stay with your pet whilst the treatment is performed and in nearly all cases the pet actually enjoys the heat producing therapy.

How will I know if this treatment will be suitable for my pet?

If your pet has any of the conditions noted before your Vet may have already spoken to you about this, but if not just ask the Vet if this would be beneficial alongside the medications your pet may already be taking.





Autumn Alert!

After hot summer days, the cooler Autumn weather can be quite a relief. It is also a great time of year to have pets; long walks through golden trees with the dog and cosy evenings at home with your cat, there is nothing better!

However, Autumn does come with a range of pet care challenges that we must be prepared for!

Firstly, It is easy to think that as the temperatures drop, so does the risk from parasites but actually the opposite is true!



Ticks thrive in the warm but moist conditions, especially in the grassy undergrowth our dogs love to explore. Ticks lie in wait for passing pets and will quickly latch on and feed on your pet's blood and can carry a range of infectious diseases (see box right).

The **Harvest Mite** is also prevalent and makes pets very itchy! It commonly congregates between toes and in ears and can be seen as tiny, bright orange dots.

Fleas also have a resurgence because once the central heating goes on, they move in! Our homes have everything they need; warmth, carpets and soft furnishings to breed in and a readily available source of food in our pets.

Ask us about how to protect against these Autumn invaders!



While you are out on your seasonal strolls, be on the look out for your dogs helping themselves to **windfall fruit!** A rotten apple can seem like a tasty snack but is likely to cause an upset tummy, especially if they eat quite a few!

Conkers and acorns are also very tempting but are actually toxic and can cause intestinal blockages.



Wasps and bees will be getting slower now and although their stings rarely cause serious issues, they are very painful. Swellings can quickly appear on paws if your pet has been batting them about, or mouths if they tried to eat them!

Seasonal Canine Illness is a rare, but serious, condition and is most commonly diagnosed between August and November. The cause is unknown but affected dogs become very poorly with sickness and diarrhoea soon after walking in woodland. Treatment is often successful but they usually need to be hospitalised and placed on a drip.

Antifreeze will also be making a comeback as the temperatures drop! It is highly toxic but sadly pets, cats especially, seem to find it irresistible. Make sure your bottles are well sealed and you clean up any spillages carefully if you top up your car.

And finally, don't forget the **wildlife!** Check bonfires thoroughly for sleepy hedgehogs and keep the bird feeder well stocked!

Tick-borne diseases

Ticks can carry and spread diseases which pose a health risk both to our pets and also to humans. Here are the main ones:

Lyme disease, also called borreliosis, is spread by ticks; affected pets (and also humans) can develop swollen joints and stiffness. They can also develop a fever, anorexia and lethargy.

Babesiosis (caused by *Babesia canis*) is an emerging tick-borne disease, destroying red blood cells and causing acute signs of anaemia in affected dogs.

Ehrlichiosis also attacks red blood cells and can be fatal.

Both Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis are particularly prevalent in continental Europe, so if you take your dog abroad on holiday, it is essential to protect them against ticks.

Prevention

Current evidence suggests that tick-borne diseases take many hours after tick attachment to be transmitted. Using a product that rapidly kills or repels ticks will help to reduce the disease risk. Additionally, pets should also be checked for ticks every 12-24 hours and any ticks removed with a special tick remover.

Bonfire Night (Mare!)

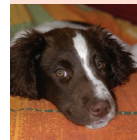
As soon as the nights draw in, fireworks go off which can be absolutely terrifying for our pets. However, there are many ways you can help them get through the 'Firework Season' and the key to helping pets cope with fireworks is good preparation:



When you know fireworks are planned, it's a good idea to bring rabbits and guinea pigs inside and give them extra bedding to hide in. It is also recommended to keep

your cats and dogs inside, so some pets may need walking earlier in the day.

Your home environment can also help your pet feel safe. If there is a low level of calming background noise, such as the television or classical music, it can help to alleviate the stress. You should keep curtains closed and



provide a den or space for your pet to retreat to if needed. Additionally, by keeping calm yourself, you may help to make your pet more confident, whereas excessive

concern may compound nervous behaviour. Pheromones can be helpful and work by producing chemicals that your pet associates with being happy and calm. Pheromone diffusers should be started 2-3 weeks before the event, ideally near your pet's den. We can also prescribe medicines that calm or sedate pets and help to reduce anxiety.

A longer term approach for noise phobia involves ongoing treatment and training that aims to make pets less noise sensitive.

Please get in touch if you would like further information on keeping your pets safe at this time of year.

If your pet is fearful of bumps & bangs why not plan ahead by booking an appointment with the Nurse who can help you manage this approaching scary time? Tel **01253 701098** or **01253 860346**

Feline SOS!

Knowing when your pet needs to be seen as an emergency is an important decision for many owners. Generally, cats are good at keeping themselves out of trouble but occasionally serious problems do occur – here are a few things to look out for:

Road Traffic Accidents: Hopefully this is something that won't happen to your cat, but it is worth being aware that sometimes there may be no obvious injuries and you might just find them hiding away. A classic clue is that their usually clean and sharp nails may be shredded and dirty from scraping on the tarmac.



Poisonings: Cats are often poisoned because the toxins get onto their coats and are groomed off. Lily pollen is the most common but others include engine oil and road salt. Additionally, permethrin flea treatments for dogs are very toxic to cats, so make sure they are never accidentally applied to cats.

Poisons they might eat include antifreeze, slug pellets and, lilies (again!), because all parts of the plant are toxic.

Signs of poisoning can often be vague so owners should be vigilant when it comes to their cat's health. Please contact us at once if you notice any signs of unusual behaviour or illness. Some of the most common causes of poisoning: lilies and antifreeze, cause severe kidney damage in very small quantities, so vigilance is needed.

Blocked bladders: Cats can frequently suffer from cystitis, especially when stressed. In rare cases, male cats may produce crystals in the urine that block the bladder so they cannot urinate. This is a **true medical emergency** so it is always important to call us if you see your cat unusually straining whilst out in the garden, or in the litter tray.

We are here to help – if you are worried about your cat, always call us for advice!

