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## Identifying & Managing Osteoarthritis in Your Cat

**“Cats are naturally inclined to hide and mask signs of illness and pain, so even small changes in behavior or mobility can indicate significant underlying pain.”**

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a common condition in cats that develops when the protective tissue in their joints wears down over time, leading to pain and friction between bones. Studies have shown that >60% of cats  $\geq 6$  years of age and >80% of cats  $\geq 14$  years of age have OA in  $\geq 1$  joint.<sup>1</sup> OA is a lifelong condition that can cause significant pain and adversely affect a cat's quality of life; however, with early disease detection and implementation of appropriate treatment interventions, your cat's pain can be effectively managed and they can continue to experience good quality of life.

### How Can I Tell if My Cat Has Osteoarthritis?

OA is often difficult for cat owners to notice, meaning OA may go undiagnosed in cats until late stages of the disease. Unlike dogs, cats with OA are not typically presented with signs commonly associated with orthopedic disease (eg, limping, stiffness).<sup>2</sup> In fact <20% of cats that have radiographic (X-ray) evidence of OA show lameness as a symptom.<sup>3</sup>

Rather, signs of OA in cats are often subtle and develop slowly over time; these signs can include reduced ability to jump, reduced activity levels, stiffness, less play instigation, litter box issues, and changes in grooming habits.<sup>1,2</sup> Even subtle changes in these behaviors warrant having your cat evaluated by a veterinarian. A cat's instincts make them naturally inclined to hide and mask signs of illness and pain, so even small changes in behavior or mobility can indicate significant underlying pain.<sup>4</sup>

To determine if your cat has OA, your veterinarian will gather a patient history, will perform a thorough physical examination, and may take radiographs to assess their joints. Your veterinarian may also use a pet owner questionnaire to gain valuable insights into your cat's behavior at home, as your assessment of your cat is valuable information for the veterinarian. You can help your veterinarian by taking videos of any changes in your cat's behavior or movement that you have noticed at home, as cats will not always display the same behavior at the veterinary clinic.<sup>5</sup>

## What Are the Treatment Options for Osteoarthritis in Cats?

If your cat is diagnosed with OA, your veterinarian may recommend a combination of strategies to help manage their pain and improve their quality of life. This may include dietary changes, weight management, supplements, physical rehabilitation, and pain management.

Pain control is a critical and foundational aspect in ensuring your cat maintains the best quality of life possible. In 2022, the first and only FDA-approved treatment to control OA pain in cats, Solensia (frunevetmab injection), became available in the US.

## How Does Solensia Work?

Solensia is a once-monthly injection, given at your veterinarian's office, that reduces the pain associated with feline OA. This treatment works with your cat's naturally made antibodies to inhibit pain signals in the body. Studies have shown the following benefits of frunevetmab when given to cats with OA:

- Improved owner-reported mobility<sup>6</sup>
- Improved owner-reported pain levels<sup>7</sup>
- Higher activity levels<sup>8</sup>
- Improved quality of life, including physical and emotional well-being<sup>9</sup>

A 3-month study showed that 77% of cat owners experienced seeing an improvement in signs of pain in their cat when their cat was treated monthly over the duration of the study.<sup>10a</sup> In addition, most cats that received Solensia in the study tolerated the medication well.<sup>10</sup> Solensia can increase mobility in cats after a single treatment, with some cat owners seeing improvements in mobility as early as 14 days after their cat received Solensia.

The most common side effects reported in a clinical study were vomiting and injection site pain.<sup>10</sup> Cats receiving Solensia should be monitored at home following administration, and any concerns of side effects should be reported to your veterinarian.

Following Solensia treatment, your cat may experience rapid pain relief, which can lead to a significant increase in activity. To help prevent injury from this sudden change, it is important to encourage a more gradual return to their normal routine. Modifications to their environment (eg, gradually elevated perches) can help safely rebuild your cat's fitness and mobility over time.

<sup>a</sup> 67% of cat owners experienced improvement in signs of their cat's pain in the placebo group.

Scan the QR code for a detailed return-to-activity plan.



## Conclusion

Although OA is common in cats, it can be challenging to detect because the signs are often subtle—even when pain is present. Recognizing changes in your pet and having proactive conversations with your veterinarian can lead to an earlier diagnosis and swift intervention, ultimately improving your cat's comfort and quality of life.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

For use in cats only. Women who are pregnant, trying to conceive or breastfeeding should take extreme care to avoid self-injection. Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, could potentially occur with self-injection. SOLENSIA should not be used in breeding cats or in pregnant or lactating queens. SOLENSIA should not be administered to cats with a known allergy to frunevetmab. The most common adverse events reported in a clinical study were vomiting and injection site pain. See full Prescribing Information, [SolensiaPI.com](https://www.solensia.com).

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