



Doctor's Notes Degenerative Joint Disease



If your senior dog is having trouble getting up, limps, appears stiff after resting, or seems reluctant to walk, run or climb stairs, then osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease (DJD) is likely the cause. The Arthritis Foundation estimates that DJD affects one in five dogs in the U.S.

In younger dogs, smooth cartilage normally protects the bones in movable joints, allowing smooth and painless movement. However, age and other factors can cause cartilage to wear down over time. The result is pain and inflammation as bone-to-bone friction begins to occur.

In addition to age, osteoarthritis can be caused by injuries, obesity, congenital disorders such as hip dysplasia and patella luxation. We can sometimes diagnose DJD with a physical exam and may recommend X-rays to determine how much the disease has progressed.

Although DJD progresses over time, we can take steps to slow its progression and keep your dog more comfortable. We may prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs or pain medication to help alleviate symptoms. Some underlying conditions, such as patella luxation, can be helped with surgery.

Certain foods and supplements may reduce the symptoms of arthritis and maintaining a healthy weight will reduce stress on the joints. Regular, light exercise can also help keep the joints more supple. If you suspect that osteoarthritis is causing your dog discomfort, provide a warm and comfortable place for rest and make sure he can access his favorite areas without jumping or other movements that jar the joints.

See us soon for an exam so we can determine the best treatment to keep your dog in maximum comfort. Our PAW Plans (Pet Annual Wellness), which include four yearly routine visits, are perfect for senior dogs who are aging at a more rapid rate and need to see us more frequently. Ask us for details!

Is Your Dog Thankful? New Studies Reveal Canine Emotions



A wave of new research on the canine brain over the past decade has given us a greater understanding of what dogs think and feel. We now know that dogs produce the same hormones and chemical changes that affect human emotions, which suggests that they share many of the same feelings we have.

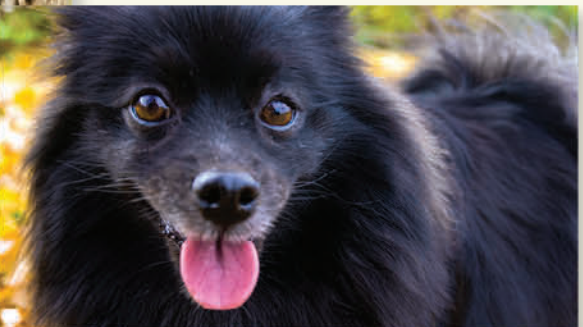
Happiness, grief, fear and stress are just some of the emotions scientists now

believe our canine friends share with us. Most importantly, researchers now believe they feel love. Like humans, dogs produce the hormone oxytocin, responsible for our feelings of love and affection. It's not a stretch to presume they feel gratitude as well.

The revelation of complex canine emotions means humans have a greater responsibility to fulfill not only our dogs' physical needs but their emotional needs as well. Here are some things your dog is especially thankful for:

- 🐾 Affection: Kind words, belly rubs and curling up next to you!
- 🐾 Play time: Having your full attention makes their day!
- 🐾 Toys: Dogs love their long-cherished treasures and new toys too.
- 🐾 Walks: Not only do they get the exercise they need; dogs also delight in having an adventure with you.
- 🐾 Food: Dogs consider treats a special blessing and are also thankful to have their regular meals on time!

Scary Sounds Airway Obstruction in Small Breed Dogs



If your small breed dog sometimes has a peculiar, honking cough, you may be observing the symptoms of tracheal collapse. These episodes, though brief, can be scary for you and your dog. This odd sound is caused by weakness in the trachea—the channel in which air travels to and from the lungs. The airway is supported by flexible, c-shaped rings of cartilage that can begin to weaken, interrupting airflow to the lungs. A dog that is affected will gasp to push air through the narrowed channel.

In addition to the "goose honk" cough, you may notice poor exercise tolerance and difficulty breathing. Eating, drinking, excitement or active play can trigger the coughing. Hot, humid weather, obesity, and irritants such as smoke can worsen symptoms. Symptoms can present at any age and may get worse with age. Any breed can suffer from the condition but it's likely genetic and is most common among toy and small breeds such as the Yorkshire Terrier, Pomeranian, Shih Tzu, Maltese and Chihuahua.

We can sometimes see tracheal narrowing on an x-ray; however, a fluoroscopy may be recommended to observe airflow through the trachea. Fortunately, tracheal collapse often responds to treatment. We may prescribe medications to reduce inflammation and coughing and antibiotics if an infection is present. In more severe cases, a stent can help support the trachea.

You can help diminish the symptoms through weight loss, monitoring your dog's exercise and excitement, and using a harness instead of a collar to prevent pressure on the trachea. Calming your dog during an attack is also important since anxiety can exacerbate the symptoms. Be sure to see us if you have observed symptoms of tracheal collapse. Did you know that our PAW Plans (Pet Annual Wellness) include four routine visits each year? They can help you budget for all of your pet's annual healthcare needs!

Did You Know? Signs Your Cat Is in Pain

Would you know if your cat was in pain? You may think the signs would be obvious, but this is often not the case. Your cat has a strong instinct to hide pain or illness because showing such weakness in the wild would make them vulnerable to predators and competitors.

This means that by the time your cat is meowing persistently or showing obvious physical symptoms such as difficulty moving, pain has progressed to an intense level. To help prevent pain that reaches this intensity, it's important to spot more subtle changes in your cat's behavior that indicate pain. These include:

- 🐾 A change in litter habits or having "accidents"
- 🐾 Eating or drinking less
- 🐾 Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- 🐾 Excessive grooming in one area
- 🐾 A hunched posture
- 🐾 Reluctance to jump up to or get down from his usual spots
- 🐾 Uncharacteristic hiding
- 🐾 A change in personality

Each of these symptoms is a good indication that your kitty is in pain. Be sure to call us if you notice any of these changes so we can diagnose the problem and provide relief.



Feline Cystitis

Does Your Cat Have Symptoms?

Feline cystitis is a common condition in cats and bouts can return throughout their lifetimes. This inflammation of a cat's urinary bladder can be caused by infection, stones and crystals in the bladder. It can also be brought on by stress. Cystitis is a painful condition and can be fatal. See us right away if your cat has symptoms.

Symptoms of feline cystitis include:

- 🐾 Repeated licking of the area
- 🐾 Straining to pass urine
- 🐾 Blood in urine
- 🐾 Passing only a small amount of urine
- 🐾 Crying while urinating
- 🐾 Frequent urination
- 🐾 Urinating in inappropriate places

You can help protect your cat from feline cystitis by taking these preventative measures:

Hydration: Concentrated urine increases the risk of developing bladder stones and crystals and produces a favorable environment for bacterial growth. Encourage drinking by offering clean water kept away from litter boxes. Filtered water that is slightly chilled or a cat water fountain can encourage them to drink more.

Proper diet: Don't feed dry food alone. Wet food has a high percentage of water to keep urine at a healthier concentration. We can also prescribe a special diet for cats susceptible to cystitis.

Clean litter: Keep your cat's litter box clean, away from food and water, and generously filled with dust-free, clumping litter.

Keep weight down: Obese cats are more likely to get cystitis. Give your cat plenty of opportunities to exercise and feed at set times instead of keeping food constantly available.

Eliminate stress. Keep your cat as content as possible and avoid disrupting their routine. Provide undisturbed areas where they can eat, drink and use the litter box. Toys and playtime can be an outlet for stress.

A Comprehensive PAW Plan (Pet Annual Wellness) for your cat is a cost-effective way to get regular checkups where we can detect feline cystitis and other diseases. Be sure to ask us for details.



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Our Pet Annual Wellness Plans include four yearly exams!
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PAW Plans
Call us today so we can help you find a plan that's just right for you and your pet.



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Call (480) 775-9966
today to make an appointment!



We're thankful for you and your pets!



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