



Arthritis In Dogs..... The Facts



- Arthritis is a painful, degenerative joint disease that results from the cumulative effects of abnormal stresses placed on the joints, causing inflammation and pain.
- Arthritis can result from early skeletal development problems with joints that suffer wear and tear over time such as elbow or hip dysplasia
- Arthritis can also result from trauma or injury to the joints.
- One in five dogs suffer from the pain and disability caused by arthritis, with the majority going undiagnosed and untreated, due to lack of awareness of the condition.
- Arthritis can affect dogs of all sizes and breeds, although larger dogs such as Labradors, German Shepherds, Rottweiler's and border collies are often more prone.
- Arthritis is a chronic condition that progressively worsens over time. If left untreated, it can cause chronic pain, difficulty in movement and a decline in the pet's quality of life.
- As it is a degenerative disease, you may not notice acute changes, just a slow deterioration
- Pet owners may notice one or more of the following behavioural or physical signs:
 - Reluctance to walk, climb stairs, jump or play, lagging behind on walks
 - Limping
 - Licking of affected joints
 - Difficulty rising from a resting position
 - Yelping in pain when touched; and
 - Change in personality e.g. resisting touch/affection

What can be done?

The answer these days is - A lot!

A diagnosis can generally be made from a general examination but X-rays may be needed to find effected joints and rule out other causes of discomfort such as fractures and bone tumors.

The mainstays of arthritis treatment and control are Cartrophen / Nutraceuticals / Anti-inflammatory and now Joondalup Central Vet is accredited for use of STEM CELL THERAPIES. An initial consultation will assess which combination is best in your pet's condition.

1. **Weight Loss & Exercise Modification**– First and foremost. If your Pet is overweight there is extra impact pressure on their joints and extra weight to get up and around. Reducing this weight can dramatically improve their comfort and quality of life and reduce the need for other treatments. Low intensity regular exercise helps to keep muscle support to the joint. Swimming is great. No ball throwing or high impact jumping activity.

2. **Cartrophen** – Is a course of 4 injections (1 week apart) that greatly improves the health of all the joints and improves the joint fluid. The joint fluid lubricates the joints and protects against ongoing damage. This course will usually last 6 months. This is then boosted every 6 months with another course or given as needed.
3. **Nutraceuticals** – These can be used with the Cartrophen. They include Glucosamine's, Chondroitin, Green lip muscle and cartilage supplements. We have looked closely into all the multitude of options available and recommend two options that actually have therapeutic levels and other anti-inflammatory support and are registered for use in animals.

Glyde powder for Dogs - Is a product registered for use in Dogs containing Green Lipped muscle, Glucosamine and Chondroitin. It is added to your dog's food.

Hills J/d - This is a new calorie controlled complete food from **Hills** designed from the ground up to have the correct balance of omega 3 and 6 oils and other joint protecting properties.

4. **Stem Cell Therapy - The way forward!** – Joondalup Central Vet is now one of only a few Hospitals in Australia accredited to offer this exciting new treatment. This day procedure uses stem cells harvested from your pet's own fat. These progenitor cells are filtered out, concentrated and activated to have amazing healing properties. They are placed straight into affected joints and can have dramatic results. This procedure has the advantage in that it can actually repair the damage and reverse the degenerative process rather than just trying to slow it down. The earlier you use this in the disease process the better. More information can be found at <http://www.joondalupvet.com.au/stemcell>
5. **NSAIDs – (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs)** New generation anti-inflammatory treatments are effective pain relief medications and can dramatically slow down the disease progression.
6. **More powerful painkillers** – Can be used down the line in severe cases to keep them comfortable.

The final combination of these will depend on presenting symptoms and severity. Please ask us if you have any queries.

NOTE: Do not be tempted to use human medications as most are very toxic to animals. Please contact us for advice.