



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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***“Oh, My Aching Joints!”***

Arthritis is not inevitable as our pets age but is fairly common. All breeds and sizes of dogs are susceptible, though it seems more prevalent in large dogs. Cats can also develop it. Arthritis is a degeneration of a joint causing the cartilage to wear down and extra bony tissue develops. This process produces inflammation and pain. Arthritis can develop after a joint is traumatized in an accident or through the “wear and tear” of years of use. Rheumatoid arthritis is an immune related problem in which the body attacks the tissue in its own joints. The hips, knees and spine are common locations. X-rays are used to diagnose arthritis.

One of the earliest signs of arthritis is stiffness, especially when a pet gets up from sleeping. Often they are better when they walk around. Discomfort may be more noticeable in cold and damp weather. Over time your pet’s symptoms will gradually worsen. The stiffness lasts longer, and your pet may walk with stiffened legs. They often have difficulty in lying down or in getting up. They may limp and their activity level decreases. It can progress to the point where your pet can hardly move.

Conventional therapy usually involves the use of pain relieving anti-inflammatory drugs. Increasingly stronger medications are often used as the symptoms progress. None of the drugs slow down the arthritic process or help the joints to heal. Some of the drugs will actually cause the joint to break down more rapidly. So even though it relieves the pain, it is actually making the problem worse.

We prefer to use natural therapies to treat arthritis before using drugs. Acupuncture can be very effective in many cases. Many alternative therapies can help the joint to heal or slow down the progression of the disease. We have several different nutritional and herbal products and one of them will usually help most pets.

Slowing down and getting stiff aren’t just a part of getting old. They are usually signs of a problem. They are signs that your pet is uncomfortable or in pain. It means that your pet needs to be examined to find out what is wrong so we can offer some relief.