

15-06-2023

## **Osteoarthritis**

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a slowly progressive and irreversible disease involving deterioration of the cartilage within joints. Arthritis is the medical term for inflammation of the joints, while osteoarthritis is the term referring to a form of chronic joint inflammation caused by deterioration of joint cartilage and underlying bone.

Osteoarthritis can range in severity from a mild, intermittent condition causing mild discomfort to an advanced clinical state characterized by constant pain and severe disability.

Causes include old age wear, trauma and congenital defects. Obesity, diabetes and excessive looseness of joints are risk factors for OA and hence 'degenerative joint disease' (DJD).

### **Treatment Options:**

#### **1. Diet & Weight Loss**

'Royal Canin **Mobility**' diet containing green-lipped muscle extract, chondroitin and glucosamine and helps maintain healthy joints. It is also a lower calorie food which helps treat obesity and reduce added strain on joints. Obesity is a strong contributory factor, so weight reduction is essential to reduce stress on the joints.

#### **2. Oral supplements**

- *Omega 3/6 Fatty Acids* are essential fatty acids not produced by the animal itself. This helps relieve pain due to their anti-inflammatory properties.
- *Chondroitin & Glucosamine* are key nutrients that makeup cartilage. They can assist in the natural repair and regeneration of your dog's cartilage.
- *PawOsteosupport capsules* contain green lipped mussel as well as omega 3/6.

*4Cyte* is an oral powder containing a plant extract 'Epitalis' that is able to stimulate healthy cartilage regeneration and reduce inflammation.

#### **3. Exercise**

Light activities such as walking and swimming help strengthen muscles while keeping ligaments and tendons flexible. This also helps to prevent obesity and aids in circulating blood to stiff joints. 15-30 minutes regularly is a great start (5 days a week). Swimming is especially great for dogs with osteoarthritis because the water supports much of the body weight and inhibits sudden excessive movements. Hydrotherapy, a fantastic option is available at 'Dogs for Life', Carrier Street, Benalla.

#### **4. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)**

Commonly used pain relieving medications. There are several safe, very effective NSAIDs formulated for veterinary patients. Routine blood and urine testing to monitor organ function (liver and kidneys) are recommended for careful long-term usage and before commencing treatment.

#### **5. Chondroprotective Drugs: Cartrophen/Pentosan injections**

Chondroprotective agents work to stimulate cartilage repair and inhibit ongoing damage. This is a course of injections

commencing once weekly for 4 weeks, with booster injections every 3 months.

#### **6. Cortisone Epidural**

Long acting corticosteroids (cortisone) can be injected into the lower lumbar spine to relieve chronic nerve pain due to sciatica (lumbosacral disease). This option can be very effective for this common, debilitating nerve pain. It involves giving three injections under short general anaesthetics within a six week period. Repeats can be performed in future if and when clinical signs indicate the pain has returned - this can be anywhere from 6 months up to 18 months from the course in our experience, and will depend on the severity of the lumbosacral disease at the time of treatment. Lumbosacral disease is an ongoing, progressive problem that will continue throughout life.

#### **7. Stem Cell Therapy**

This is a relatively new area of treatment for veterinary patients and there are several different systems available. Research indicates effects are due to local down regulation of joint inflammation and promotion of tissue healing. We are happy to offer a referral.

*Please feel free to contact the clinic and make an appointment to discuss any*

*of these treatment options for your animal.*