

# Arthritis

Arthritis is a general term that encompasses a large number of entities. The simplest of explanations would be to say that arthritis is an inflammation of the joint.

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of inflammatory joint disease both in humans and in Canines.

Interestingly enough there are hardly any recordable cases in the Feline species.

Osteoarthritis is a progressive disease that can be classified by two pathological processes:

1. degeneration of the articular cartilage with a loss of proteoglycan and collagen, and
2. proliferation of new bone. In addition, a variable inflammatory response occurs within the synovial membrane.

Overall, Osteoarthritis is an inflammatory disease that causes stiffness, pain, swelling and limited movement.

The risk of Osteoarthritis generally increases with the age of the dog, usually affecting dogs over the age of 7. Clinical signs are more prevalent in working dogs, obese dogs and dogs that are kept outside in cold or damp conditions. Dogs who suffer physical trauma and developmental disorders such as patella luxations or hip

dysplasia also have an increased incidence.

## PREVENTION

In many parts of the world arthritis is nonexistent. People who eat a diet largely based on fruits and vegetables never complain about joint disease. On the canine side, there is much talk about Osteoarthritis being largely associated with malnourishment, deficiency and toxic build-up. It is hence not a stretch to assume that excessive waste from carbohydrates, grains and other inappropriate proteins create toxic waste and when not properly eliminated become a cesspool for disease. When there is an excess of waste that cannot be eliminated by the liver, skin and other vital organs, the excess nitrogenic waste in the form of urea is typically deposited in the joints when the kidneys can no longer work efficiently or effectively.

In order to alleviate the debilitating effects that arthritis has on the human body most wholistic health care professionals suggest a vegetarian diet of whole foods such as fruits and vegetables with limited amounts of whole grains. The idea behind this diet is to meet what the body needs but not to exceed it. The body easily eliminates fruits and vegetables and complex carbohydrates (for an omnivore) are easily converted into useable energy without putting excess wear and tear on the body.

Apply that same theory to carnivores and since dogs are carnivores we apply that theory to them. Cereals, grains,

fruits and vegetables are not part of a carnivore's diet so therefore it stands to reason that these ingredients would serve to create excessive waste production in the body. If canines were fed a species appropriate diet it would make sense that the body would process and convert proteins appropriately.

Essential fatty acids or Omega 3 originally known as Vitamin F have proven to reduce inflammation in both humans and animals. These oils are essential to the health of your dog. The question lies within its source; if carnivores cannot assimilate plant or grain matter then it would be correct to assume that oils from plants are not effective for dogs. Fish would be the best source of EFAs for a carnivore. It is also important to note that high amounts of EFA Omega 6 caused increased collagen induced arthritis in rats and exasperates vasculitis in autoimmune mice.



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It is important also to note that Omega 3 reduces inflammation and Omega 6 tends to promote inflammation.

Clearly, a balance is important.

Obesity can contribute to inflammatory conditions. If your dog is overweight it puts unnecessary stress on the digestive tract which in turn puts pressure on the joints themselves. If the body is under stress from excess weight then it cannot perform its function properly. Keep your dog lean and fit.

Choosing a good breeder that regularly tests for Hip and Elbow dysplasia is a great place to start. If we can start with good genetics then it reduces the chances by some small degree.

What is very interesting is that inflammation is central to the cutaneous manifestation of psoriasis and atopic eczema. This brings us to the skin being a sponge for toxins, absorbing excess waste from unusable proteins. An important rule to remember is; to meet but not exceed what the body needs.

Some natural aids and preventatives

### HERBAL SOLUTIONS

Licorice root is a natural corticosteroid and stimulates the secretion of hormones by the adrenal glands. It is an anti-inflammatory and reduces swelling and eases some skin conditions. .

Boswellia- Stimulates tissue immunity, repairs damaged tissue, compare with Ibuprofen.

Bromelain- A protein digesting enzyme that relaxes muscles, helps with spasms, anti-inflammatory.

Comfrey – reduces bone inflammation-osteitis

Cayenne- For pain

Chamomile- anti-inflammatory, good for spasms, relieves pain and reduces swelling.

Curcumin- Anti-inflammatory, reduces pain, swelling, tenderness

Ginger – reduces inflammation, pain and swelling. Blocks the body's production of inflammatory chemicals such as prostaglandin and leukotriene

Gotu Kola- Stimulates Collagen synthesis for healing tendons and ligaments

### HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

The following is a basic guideline. Potency and dosage are dependent on the state of disease and the individual animal. Be sure to have a good Materia Medica for reference or a good relationship with a homeopathic practitioner.

Rhus tox 30c - If pain and stiffness is better after movement.

Arnica 30c- for bruising, aching, soreness

Ruta grav 30c- helps ease inflammation.

Hypericum 30c – if pinched or injured nerves may be involved. Has particularly good action on the sacrum and the coccyx

Bryonia 30c- If the animal prefers to stay in one place.

Acid salicylicum 6c - Aggravated by movement, joints are tender to the touch

Actaea rac 6c – heaviness in limbs, stiffness and awkwardness while moving.

Calc fluor 30c – swelling of the joints especially useful when the carpus is indicated.

There is an amazing correlation between joint injury and the skin. Most cases of arthritis has some relationship to skin disease of varying degrees. When treating pain and discomfort always remember to look at the whole picture including the immune system.

Remember to find as similar a picture as possible between the remedy of choice and the individual dog.

Herbal, Homeopathy, Acupuncture, TCM and other alternative modalities have high success rates in the care and management of pain in dogs with Arthritis. Generally the use of NSAIDs is not necessary or recommended.

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