



THE BARRACKS
VET SURGERY
MOSMAN

ARTHRITIS

What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a very common condition, affecting the majority of pets as they age. The spongy cartilage which cushions the joints begins to break down, resulting in painful inflammation. To compensate for the cartilage loss, small bone spurs grow in an attempt to stabilise the joint. This restricts movement and causes difficulty and pain especially in colder weather.

What are the symptoms of arthritis?

Pets will seem stiffer in their movements especially after sleep or resting in one position. They will move more slowly, and be reluctant to run or play as before. They may be hesitant to climb stairs or jump onto a table or into the car. They may lick at their paws or limbs to try to relieve pain. The pain may even make them seem grumpy, as they try to protect themselves from other pets or children. If you suspect your pet is in pain, he probably is, as pets do their best to hide symptoms lest they appear weak and vulnerable to competitors or predators.

How can I relieve my pet's pain?

- Take them to the Vet who will provide painkillers, anti-inflammatories and/or a series of injections to slow the progress of the condition. Owners remark at the improvement in their pet's agility after only a few weeks.
- Discuss supplements such as fish oil or omega 3 and 6 which are available as treats. There is also a food called j/d (joint diet) which provides the appropriate mix of nutrients.
- Keep your pet lean, every extra kilogram affects the load on the joints.
- Provide ramps or steps to allow your pets easier access to the car or a safe refuge.
- Encourage gentle, regular exercise. Dogs will benefit from a swim instead of a run. Slow down any ball games and avoid strenuous or prolonged activity.
- Provide a warm, padded bed, raised from the floor and out of draughts.
- If they appear itchy, address the cause as they will not be as flexible as before.