

# Arthritis

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## Overview

Degenerative joint disease (DJD), or arthritis, affects the smooth articular cartilage of the joint, which is the covering of bone in the joints that is responsible for the smooth, non-painful motion of joints. When it becomes worn, raw bone surfaces become exposed and rub together. DJD is the result, causing pain and lack of joint mobility.

DJD can occur over a lifetime of wear or as a result of injury. Primary cartilage damage can also initiate a cascade of events that result in further cartilage damage and joint lining inflammation. This results in a vicious cycle of cartilage degeneration, release of degenerative factors and continued cartilage degeneration.

## Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Arthritis is generally diagnosed by history, physical examination findings and x-rays of the affected legs and joints.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. The majority of dogs with arthritis benefit from anti-inflammatory medications. In severe cases, surgery may be recommended. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

## What to Watch for\*:

- Lameness
- Swollen joints
- Muscle atrophy
- Dry crackling sound upon movement of the joint

*\* Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*