

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

## **New Treatment for Arthritis**

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Have you ever noticed your pet having a trouble getting up after a nap? Does he or she walk stiffly or limp the first steps? Is this problem worse after a weekend full of activity or when the weather changes?

If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions, there is a good chance your pet has arthritis. Arthritis is an inflammation of the joints caused by loss of cartilage and increased bone growth or bone spurs. It is caused by wear and tear on the joint that may be accelerated by excessive weight or genetic defects like hip dysplasia or injury to the joint. Most pets do not show signs of pain until they are at least 6 to 10 years of age, but some will show symptoms much earlier.

Your first step is to have your pet examined by your veterinarian to rule out other possible causes for sore joints such as an injury or a disease like Lymes or Lupus. X-rays can be taken if there is concern about possible injuries or even bone cancer. It is also a good idea to have blood tests done. This will not only help rule out other diseases, but also help determine which medications your pet can take safely.

If your pet is diagnosed with arthritis, there are several medications that help control the pain. Aspirin (not Tylenol or other substitute) is a good start. A usual dosage is 1 tablet once or twice a day for an 80# dog. Do not give aspirin or aspirin substitutes to cats. There are two medications that can be used for both dogs and cats. One is called Chondroitin and the other Glucosamine. These help the pet by lubricating the joint, much like making sure you have good quality oil in your car. These medications are best if used early in the course of the disease, and can be given together and with aspirin. There are two brands of dog food, Hill's and Eukanuba, that contain these ingredients in the diet, so all you have to do is feed the dog instead of giving a pill.

For dogs that still seem uncomfortable, there are stronger medications. These are potent painkillers. These can only be dispensed after your veterinarian has seen your pet. They are sold by prescription only. One medication is called Rimadyl and the other is Etogesic. A new product called Duramaxx has also been shown to be

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very effective. If your pet does is going to stay on these medications long term, periodic blood tests are recommended.

Keep your pet trim and give him regular, moderate exercise once he has been diagnosed with arthritis. A 15% decrease in weight has been shown to be just as effective as aspirin in relieving pain. Giving him a soft, warm bed will often keep him happier and healthier longer, too.

If you have any questions about the new prescription pain medications or would like your pet checked for arthritis, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾