

Name

Date



# Caring for your dog STIFFNESS and ARTHRITIS



**Most older dogs** have aches and pains just as older people do. Some experience stiffness or lameness others just "slow down".

**Younger active dogs** often experience periods of stiffness or lameness just like high performance athletes and may require treatments quite different from arthritis older dogs.

**Most dogs with stiffness** or arthritis can be greatly improved by **1. Correct Medication** ✓ and **2. Lifestyle Changes.** ✓

## 1. Medication

**"Cartrophen"** - The greatest advance in arthritis treatment we have seen (not yet available for humans!) It stimulates the healing cells within the joint to renew the joint cartilage and can actually reverse arthritis. A course of 4 injections at weekly intervals, maintained to effect as required at approx. 2 mo. intervals thereafter. The benefit to the dog can be dramatic.

**Anti-inflammatories** - The last few years have seen a great leap forwards in relief from pain and inflammation associated with arthritis.

**"Rimadyl"** (small, or tasty chewable tablets) or **"Metacam"** (drops in the food) used regularly will usually maintain good mobility.

Both of these anti-inflammatories work well with **"Cartrophen"**.

**Anabolic injection monthly** - strengthens muscles weakened by arthritis.

**Quality Diets help joint health.**

**Hill's J/D Reduced Calorie diet - special diet to ease joints, preserve cartilage, and keep the weight down.**

**Hill's R/D slimming diet / Eukanuba Optimum Weight Control.**

**N.B. "Light" diets are not low calorie enough to reduce weight.**

**Nutraceuticals** - nutritional supplements made from natural ingredients which assist in the body's own maintenance and repair mechanisms.

They limit cartilage wear and promote new, healthy cartilage formation.

## 2. Lifestyle Changes

**Weight Control** - Take the weight off the legs and they'll work much better. Feed a good quality low-calorie diets (see over) with controlled, regular exercise. Regular weight checks at the surgery will help monitor your dog's progress. "Slentrol" helps reduce appetite and aids slimming.

**Weight today** ..... **Ideal weight** .....

**Raised Food Bowls** - It is not easy for older dogs to eat or drink from a bowl at floor level. They will strain their back and neck in the process. Raising the food and drink bowl to chin level makes life easier for an older dog.

**Exercise** - Regular controlled exercise is essential - keep moving! Make it interesting and stimulating, gradually stretch your dog's capabilities. Ideally exercise on level grassland. Avoid hills or rough ground. For hindleg problems try a steady walk down a gentle slope and get a lift back. For foreleg problems try a steady walk up a gentle slope. Avoid overdoing it on good days!

As mobility improves begin 20 min. power-walk session three times a day.

**Avoid Stairs and Slippery Surfaces** - Many dogs improve greatly if they avoid stairs. Coming down stairs is very harsh on the shoulders. Consider using a child gate to stop access to the stairs. Carpeted floors provide a surer footing than laminate wood flooring. Trainers (bootees) for dogs can help arthritic dogs walk on laminate floors - you'll find them on the internet.

**Hydrotherapy** - This is an excellent way of regaining strength in tired or ageing limbs - Try the **Water Treadmill at Myerscough College** (01995 642216), Other local hydrotherapy centres can be found on the internet.

## Further Investigation

**Blood Tests** - A routine blood test is recommended for any dog that is on long-term arthritis medication.

**X-Rays** of the spine and limbs will identify any specific areas of trouble. Some treatment are best given by injection directly into the affected joint.

**Other Tests** - Joint fluid, Thyroid and Rheumatoid tests may be helpful.

◆ *If you are insured, tests and x-rays should be re-claimable.*

◆ **Treat early to keep your dog mobile and active**