

ARTHRITIS IN DOGS

By: Michelle Lonergan ~ Tabby & Jack's

ARTHRITIS *n.* Inflammation of a joint, usually accompanied by pain, swelling, and stiffness, and resulting from infection, trauma, degenerative changes, metabolic disturbances, or other causes. It occurs in various forms, such as bacterial arthritis, osteoarthritis, or rheumatoid arthritis. Arthritis affects one in every five adult dogs in the U.S. and is one of the most common sources of chronic pain that veterinarians treat.

Signs of Arthritis:

- Stiffness when getting up or lying down
- Limping
- Slowing down on walks
- Pain after exercise
- Reluctant to jump or climb stairs
- Sleep more

It is important to recognize these signs and begin treatment early, to slow the progression and help preserve your dog's quality of life.

TREATMENTS:

Glucosamine and Chondroitin: Glucosamine, an amino sugar, promotes the formation and repair of cartilage. Chondroitin, a carbohydrate, is a cartilage component that promotes water retention and elasticity and inhibits the enzymes that break down cartilage. Both compounds are manufactured by the body. Glucosamine supplements are derived from shellfish shells; chondroitin supplements are generally made from cow cartilage.

Sources:

- Glucosamine and Chondroitin come in several supplement forms: tablet, powder or a liquid and is added to the food. Look for Glucosamine and Chondroitin supplements combined together, as studies show that they are much more effective when combined together.
- Raw Chicken Necks, Turkey Necks and Chicken Backs: The natural cartilage and gristle contain high levels of glucosamine. (Also, excellent source of calcium for healthy teeth and bones)

Fish Oil: Only use "wild" fish sources such as wild Alaskan salmon oil. Avoid fish farms that expose the fish to chemicals. Wild salmon oil is a premium source of OMEGA-3 Fatty Acids. These nutrients are linked to healthy heart and brain function,

supple and shiny skin and coat, normal functioning immune system, as well as healthy joints.

Diet: Certain foods may increase inflammation and aggravate arthritis, such as plants from the nightshade family, including potatoes (not sweet potatoes), tomatoes, peppers (all kinds), and eggplants. Certain foods may help with arthritis: Celery, ginger, alfalfa, tropical fruits such as mango and papaya are all good to add to the diet of a dog with arthritis.

Weight and Exercise: It is extremely important to keep your arthritic dog as lean as possible. Extra weight puts added stress on the joints, and makes it harder for your dog to get proper exercise.

Natural anti-inflammatories: Fish Oil, Vitamin C, Bromelain (enzyme found in pineapple) and herbs such as boswellia, yucca root, turmeric, hawthorn, nettle leaf, licorice, and meadowsweet.

There are an endless number of supplements and therapies that help with arthritis. If one therapy does not work, it is important to keep trying different combinations to find what works for your dog. Each dog is an individual, and what works for one may be different from what works for another.