



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2015 NEWSLETTER

FELINE ARTHRITIS

It's a fact of life for many of us that as we get older, our joints begin to degenerate as part of the aging process. Cartilage, which forms a cushion between the bones at a joint, can deteriorate and become less flexible, leading to arthritis (also known as osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease). Any joint can be affected.

As our feline family members age, they too may begin to experience arthritis, leading to joint inflammation and pain. Arthritis may also develop due to joint injury, dislocation, or infection; extra weight can also place strain on your kitty's joints.

Kitties with arthritis may demonstrate overall stiffness, decreased flexibility, discomfort when you pet them or pick them up, low activity levels, an altered gait, or a reluctance to run or jump. You may also see increased accidents outside the litter box due to joint pain when climbing in and out of the box.

To diagnose arthritis, your veterinarian will conduct a physical exam. Radiographs (x-rays) and other diagnostic tests may also be performed to help determine the cause of the joint pain and inflammation.

If arthritis is diagnosed, there are a number of ways you can improve your kitty's quality of life. Nutraceutical products such as Cosequin and Dasuquin can help slow the arthritis process, enhance the formation of cartilage, and inhibit joint enzymes (which tend to break down cartilage). Prescription pain medications can minimize joint pain. If your kitty is overweight, joint strain and

pain can be reduced by helping your kitty reach a healthy weight; our veterinarians will work with you to develop a safe and slow weight loss program.

You can also help keep your kitty more comfortable by ensuring that bedding, food, and water are at ground level so jumping isn't required to access them. Help keep litter box accidents to a minimum by purchasing a litter box with low sides and providing easy access that doesn't require climbing or jumping. A nice warm bed can help soothe arthritic joints. Many commercial products are available, including electrically-heated pads and beds. If your kitty will permit it, gentle massage can help ease sore muscles and stiff joints. Alternative treatments such as acupuncture and chiropractic care may provide pain relief and increased flexibility.

Although arthritis cannot be cured, a planned treatment program can help keep your feline family member much more comfortable. Please speak with us for more information. And don't miss our great April special offer for our readers!

FELINE PARASITE PREVENTION

Along with warmer weather typically comes an increase in parasite population. Feline parasites are divided into two broad categories: those that live outside the body (such as fleas, mites, lice, and ticks), and those that live inside the body (such as roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, heartworms, and ringworms).

Parasites are not only annoying to you and your cat, they can also spread disease and, if left untreated, may lead to serious medical problems.

There are a number of easy-to-administer monthly topical medications to help prevent feline parasites. Please ask us for more information.

APRIL SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

During the month of April, we're offering **free trial samples of nutraceuticals that may help improve your kitty's joint function and decrease pain.** To be eligible for these samples, your kitty must have received a physical exam at the Sacramento Cat Hospital within the last year.

Please stop by our front desk for more information.



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