

# Vets Park

for the pets in your life - your vet for life

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## Osteoarthritis

Your pet has been diagnosed with osteoarthritis. This is a common condition especially in older larger breed dogs and many cats. Arthritis is painful and so treatment is mandatory to prevent suffering.

Before we can start an appropriate treatment plan we may need to perform some routine blood screening tests. This is because some of the medication we use in the management of pain and inflammation may be contra-indicated if your pet has pre-existing kidney problems.

We may recommend taking your pet to an orthopaedic specialist if we feel surgical intervention is indicated. The costs involved should be covered by your insurance policy.

### **Management of Osteoarthritis**

The medical care of pets with arthritis has advanced rapidly in recent years. We will probably recommend a multi-modal approach using more than one type of treatment.

1. Commence a weight reduction programme if your pet is overweight.
2. Make sure your dog receives regular GENTLE exercise. We have a visiting veterinary physiotherapist who can help.
3. Consider alternative forms of exercise such as hydrotherapy. Swimming helps build muscle mass which is useful in supporting joints. We can refer you to a local centre if indicated.
4. Most pets require daily pain and anti-inflammatory medication called NSAIDs. These can be in the form of an oral liquid, mouth spray or tablets.
5. Joint supplements such as 'Seraquin' are used to help maintain normal function in joints and tendons. We have a variety of supplements to suit all tastes as we know not all pets like the same thing.
6. Cartrophen injections can help repair cartilage and are initially given weekly for 4 weeks. For some dogs Cartrophen is very successful in relieving pain and lameness associated with osteoarthritis.
7. Prescription Diet j/d is a revolutionary food that has been shown to improve mobility in as little as 21 days.
8. Supplementing the diet with additional fatty acids has been shown to slow down the destruction of cartilage.

### **Side Effects**

Side effects of the drugs used to treat osteoarthritis are not common but may occur. To help reduce the risk of adverse reactions make sure you give the NSAIDs with or after food. If your pet does not eat DO NOT give the medication but contact us immediately.

Liquid NSAIDs can be reduced, after an initial 6 week period, to the lowest effective dose. This can dramatically reduce side effects.

Feeding your cat wet food can also help maintain hydration and reduce side effects.

Safety first, if you are in any doubt, DO NOT give the medication and speak to us.

### **Long term**

Once your pet has started on a personal osteoarthritis management programme we will need to see you more often than previously. This might be for weight checks, for repeat cartrophen courses (maybe every 6-12 months) or for regular blood screening tests.

All pets that are receiving long-term NSAIDs need to have their kidney function checked every 6 months as an absolute minimum. Repeat prescriptions of NSAIDs will not be given to animals unless examined by a veterinary surgeon every 6 months.

We now have loyalty discount programmes for clients who regularly purchase joint supplements or Prescription Diet from us.

Written estimates are available for every test, treatment or diet recommended.

There is a lot of information available about osteoarthritis on the internet. It is important that you understand much of this is not accurate. These are websites we have checked and are happy with their content:

[www.metacam.co.uk](http://www.metacam.co.uk)  
[www.seraquin.co.uk](http://www.seraquin.co.uk)  
[www.fortehealthcare.com/uk](http://www.fortehealthcare.com/uk)  
[www.hillspet.co.uk/mobility](http://www.hillspet.co.uk/mobility)  
[www.icatcare.org](http://www.icatcare.org)