



Katherine Wallace, DVM King's Crossing Animal Hospital

Dr. Katherine Wallace received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Health Science from Guilford College in 2011, and a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Ohio State University in 2017.

She is very excited to join King's Crossing Animal Hospital as she previously worked for years with Dr. Fuller before entering veterinary school to pursue her lifelong dream. Dr. Wallace is committed to providing outstanding care to her patients and their families, and is particularly interested in pain management and end-of-life care. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, playing doubles tennis and spending time with her husband BJ, their dog Indie and their cat Hobbes.

THE WOES OF AGING...

Managing Arthritis

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Does this sound familiar? Fluffy has a hard time getting up in the morning or moving around after long naps. She used to love to take five-mile hikes and now seems to get stiff or sore after a one-mile trot. Maybe you have noticed that she plays less and naps more. Sometimes, she may be reluctant to go up and down stairs or has difficulty getting into the car. You may wonder, "Is my pet feeling a lot of pain, or is this a normal change associated with aging? Could this be arthritis?" It can be difficult to determine how much pain our pet is experiencing. Your veterinarian is the best person to evaluate your pet for arthritis and to steer you to the right treatment to help keep Fluffy moving and grooving for as long as possible.

WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

Arthritis is a painful joint disease that tends to worsen over time, and it can affect both dogs and cats. Arthritis can affect any or multiple joints such as the knees, elbows, hips, shoulder or back. As the bodies of our pets age, normal wear and tear can damage parts of the joints. Deterioration of joints also can be hastened by obesity, previous injury, or other orthopedic conditions. This deterioration results in inflammation and eventually pain. You may see this expressed in your pet as slower movement, stiffness, decreased activity, or in severe cases, limping.

HOW IS ARTHRITIS DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian starts by taking a detailed medical history and then performing a thorough examination. Sometimes blood tests and other diagnostics such as X-rays are recommended to diagnose arthritis and to rule out other diseases and orthopedic conditions.

WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS ONCE MY PET IS DIAGNOSED WITH ARTHRITIS?

Most owners have heard about prescription pills that help with arthritis-associated pain. However, many people don't realize there are other good options that may work for your pet. Not every dog and cat is the same. Below are some options that you may want to discuss with your veterinarian.

LASER THERAPY

Laser therapy is a therapeutic treatment that uses light energy to reduce inflammation and block pain. Laser therapy does not take a lot of time, and there is no heat, redness or swelling during or after the treatment. Most owners notice positive results after one to three treatments. Chronic conditions such as arthritis can be controlled or improved with regular laser therapy sessions.

ASSISI LOOP

The Assisi Loop is a device that uses low-level pulses of electromagnetic energy to help improve pain, increase mobility, reduce swelling, and decrease the need for pain medication in an animal with arthritis. It is a loop that you put around the area of pain and leave on for 15 minutes. The Assisi Loop can be used at your home and works well in combination with other arthritis treatments or on its own.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements, including Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate (Dasuquin, Cosequin), Adequan injections, Omega fatty acids (fish oil), and Vitamin E help lubricate your pet's joints and thus protect the joint cartilage from further wear-and-tear. Studies show these supplements also may provide a slight anti-inflammatory benefit. Overall, these products won't hurt your pet and are a good addition to other arthritic therapies.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATIONS

Anti-inflammatory medications, specifically NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications), are commonly prescribed for arthritic pets because they have the most consistent noticeable beneficial effects. You may have heard of these products (Rimadyl, Metacam, Previcox, Deramaxx), which work by reducing swelling, stiffness, and joint pain. It is important for your pet to have routine blood work done while on these medications because potential long-term side effects can include stomach ulcers, and liver and kidney problems. There is a new anti-inflammatory medication on the market called Galliprant which may be associated with less severe side effects.

Don't forget, any extra weight on your pet can worsen arthritis pain. Always talk with your veterinarian to make a plan that is right for you and your pet.

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