



**MALVERN
VET
HOSPITAL**



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ARTHRITIS IN CATS

Arthritis, osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease, is a common problem. It is the result of wear and tear of cartilage in the joints. Cartilage damage and loss is accelerated by poorly conformed joints or joint injury. So far the only cure for degenerative joints is joint replacement (e.g. hip replacement). Arthritis is always progressive and worsens over time.

We have a range of medications available that are designed to preserve cartilage, decrease inflammation and provide pain relief. Improved joint function will increase mobility but cannot achieve a cure.

In the early stages of arthritis, medical management is often the best option for cats. If the pain is more severe or if joint conformation needs to be addressed, surgery becomes a better option.

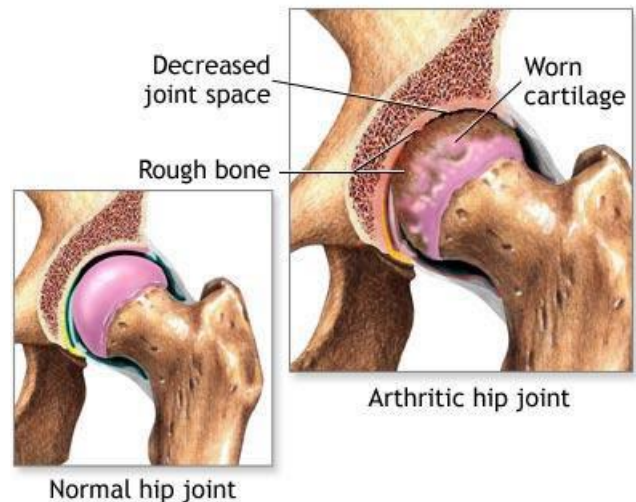
There are several options for managing arthritis in cats which are often difficult to appreciate fully in one visit. The purpose of this sheet is to outline the various medications available for managing arthritis.

Is my cat in pain?

It can be difficult to identify pain in cats as they tend to become reclusive rather than show obvious signs of pain. You may notice decreased activity, reluctance to jump onto/off surfaces. Difficulty using the litter tray. Walking stiffly or limping

Weight management

If your cat is overweight this can worsen the arthritis and pain as more weight/force is taken on the joints. Maintaining a lean body weight is important as a drug free way to manage arthritis. If you'd like advice on your cat's body condition and weight loss – please discuss this with our vets or veterinary nurses.



Zydax Injections

Zydax (pentosan) is a unique drug that stimulates cartilage re-growth; a repair damaged joints and improves the quality of joint fluid. It also has anti-inflammatory properties. There are no side effects from long or short term therapy with Zydax and it can be used safely with other drugs. It is given as a weekly injection for four weeks and this course is repeated every 3, 6 or 12 months depending on the cat's needs. It can take three or four weeks before an improvement is noticed so be patient.

Hills Prescription diet j/d

This diet provides some important supplement for cats with arthritis. It is an excellent 'drug free' option.

It contains a very high level of nutritional supplementation of omega-3 fatty acids (fish oils). These omega 3s are anti-inflammatory at high levels and is helpful for cats with arthritis. Prescription diet j/d contains the highest levels of total omega-3 fatty acids of any therapeutic food for the management of cats with osteoarthritis. It has been



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clinically proven in trials - two recent studies provide high quality data that show diet with high levels of total omega-3 fatty acids and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) can improve the clinical signs of osteoarthritis.

FEATURE

- Breakthrough EPA Technology
- Superior, evidence-based medicine
- Over 4 times more Omega-3 fatty Acids than nearest competitor
- Proven to reduce NSAID dosage up to 25%
- Choice of diet form (wet & dry)

BENEFIT

- Slows progression of arthritis by blocking the genes that produce Cartilage destroying enzymes
- No other arthritis diet is clinically proven
- Relieves inflammation & pain in and around the joint
- Complements conventional therapies for safer long term management
- Aids long-term compliance.

Non steroidal anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

E.g. Onsior, Metacam.

These drugs act directly at the site of tissue damage to reduce inflammation. They are good for relieving pain. Human NSAIDs (panadol, nurofen) can be lethal in cats so their use in pets is best avoided. Inflammation is destructive to cartilage so by controlling inflammation the joint degeneration slows. They also help to improve muscle strength as cats are less painful and more inclined to use their joints and maintain strength to support joints. In rare cases these drugs can cause stomach ulcers at high doses. NSAIDs cannot be used with cortisone (prednisolone/steroids). These drugs have not been clinically tested and registered for use beyond 7 days in cats, however sometimes the benefits outweigh the risks of use in painful cats. Kidney function should be checked with regular blood tests while cats are on this medication. In cats with existing kidney problems the use of NSAIDs should be avoided. They come as tablets or liquid and are given daily.

Joint Nutrition

E.g. Paw Osteocare and Seaflex.

These provide the cartilage with lots of raw 'building blocks' (Glucosamine, chondroitin, essential amino acids, minerals and vitamins) for growing new cartilage. In arthritic joints there is a large turnover of these important raw materials. They are not "drugs" and do not have side effects, however there is still no hard evidence that proves they work (in humans or animals). They come as chewable forms.

Your Vet will discuss with you the best options for your pet.

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