

Dog Osteoarthritis Dilemma

Information on how to treat your dog's osteoarthritis.

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a 15-year-old Chow Chow with osteoarthritis. He is taking a canine glucosamine/chondroitin supplement, a senior vitamin supplement (which includes MSM and Ester-C), and his food is supplemented with 3 tablespoons of either salmon oil or flaxseed oil three to four times each week. He gets plenty of supervised activity twice daily. He receives acupuncture and chiropractic treatments quarterly with my other two 9-year-old dogs. He is still stiff when he arises and his right shoulder seems to bother him periodically. Is there anything else I can do to make him more comfortable? He is in good spirits, likes to play, and has 24/7 access to outdoor backyard with dog door with me and the other dogs and keeps up with my 9-year-old Chow Chow.

A. You're doing everything possible to help your Chow Chow with his osteoarthritis. I only have a few suggestions that might help:

1. I would consider limiting your dog's activity. Your elderly guy gets more exercise than many younger dogs and most people. Although it is beneficial to maintain muscle tone, increased activity can make the inflammation of the joints caused by arthritis worse.
2. Some prescription diets are specifically formulated to help with osteoarthritis. These diets are part of a wonderful trend in veterinary medicine where you can treat many conditions with diet alone. Diets exist for weight loss, dental disease, food allergies, skin allergies, dementia, kidney disease and heart disease, to name a few. Be careful of grocery store imitations--certified and tested prescription diets are only available from your veterinarian.
3. Other herbal medications may be helpful, but many are untested. Continue to check Dog Fancy and the Dogchannel.com for the latest developments.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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