

Supplements Not Enough for Arthritic Dog

Three-legged arthritic dog needs help from medication.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. My 8-year-old Welsh Corgi mix was hit by a car in 2002. She had her front leg amputated due to nerve damage. Now she is having problems with her rear leg on the same side. Our vet said it is arthritis. We have begun giving her glucosamine and chondroitin. Is there anything else that we can do to make her more comfortable?

A. Any three-legged dog should receive the very best care for arthritis. The dog's discomfort will be greater because of the increased stress on the remaining joints.

There are a number of more powerful drugs that can be used together with minimal effects to help with the pain and inflammation of arthritis. Here is what I would use:

1. NSAID: Rimadyl, Metacam, Previcox, aspirin, many others
2. Tramadol (an opioid-like drug with minimal side effects)
3. Tylenol (safe to use in dogs with healthy livers)
4. Adequan (injectable hyaluronic acid)

Ask your vet about starting these medications, and if he or she is reluctant, seek out another veterinarian. You can start with one or two medications, and then add other medications and increase the dose or frequency as needed. In the meantime, glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate can help with mild signs of arthritis.

Keep in mind there are prescription diets, such as Hills J/D that contain these nutraceuticals, so they would not need to be supplemented.