

Soothing Arthritis Solutions

Help your dog cope with arthritis and live more comfortably.

Marcia King

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Next, TreatmentIf your dog has arthritis, treatment likely can help:

Supplement with nutraceuticals. Chondroitin, glucosamine, manganese ascorbate, and Omega-3 fatty acids promote normal joint cartilage, decrease joint inflammation, and enhance the lubricating effect of the joint fluid, Palmer says. For maximum effectiveness, use early in the treatment course, rather than as a last-ditch effort. Intended for long-term use, nutraceuticals can take several weeks to initiate a response. It's unknown if they aid with prevention.

Administer NSAIDs. Give prescription or over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on an as-needed, short-term, or long-term basis, per your veterinarian's recommendation, to relieve pain and inflammation. Responses usually occur within three to 14 days. Not all dogs respond equally to the same medication, Millis reports, so talk to your veterinarian about switching to another drug if your dog doesn't improve after two weeks. Do not give human over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen to your dog. These can be deadly in pets.

In addition, alternative therapies help some dogs. (See Options for arthritic dogs .)

Successfully managing arthritis is a lifelong commitment, but one that often pays off, as happened with Priscilla. Her treatment included weight loss, restricted activity, and NSAIDs on an as-needed basis. As she lost weight, she became more active, Blankenship recalls. In short order, she lost about 30 pounds, built up her body, and kept pace with all of us as we walked. It's been seven years since her diagnosis, and since that time, Priscilla hasn't had any more lameness or stiffness.

She is still energetic and full of life, Blankenship says. On the HorizonWhat might be next in arthritis management? According to Darryl Millis, DVM, of the University of Tennessee, studies are underway looking at cartilage grafting to repair arthritic joints and injectable treatments to improve cartilage health.