

## Canine Arthritis Month

Arthritis, also known as osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease is the number one cause of chronic pain in pets. As pets age, normal wear and tear on the smooth cartilage that covers and protects bones near a joint, begins to break down. The friction between the exposed bones causes pain and inflammation.

### Signs you pet may be suffering from arthritis:

#### Early arthritis symptoms:

Dogs that have early signs of arthritis may simply be lame after a bout of exercise, and then recover. These dogs may be young dogs that, because of their conformation, have a predisposition to joint problems in later life.

#### Moderate Arthritis Symptoms:

Some stiffness when first getting up

Lame after regular exercise

Walks more slowly

Reluctant to jump or climb stairs

#### Advanced arthritis symptoms:

Needs help getting up

Limps all the time

Unwilling to climb stairs or jump

Difficulty squatting to urinate or defecate

Loss of muscle on affected limb

Indicates pain when touched

Hops instead of runs

### How do we diagnose Arthritis in your pet?

Our veterinarian will ask you for a complete history of your pet's lifestyle, including diet and any previous injuries. He will then do a physical exam to look for the causes of your pet's discomfort. This may include x-rays of the affected joints and blood work to rule out infection, like Lyme disease.