



# Dog Days of Arthritis

**DOGS GET ARTHRITIS, TOO.**  
Learn the signs and how to provide the best care.

**Did you know that 1 in 5 adult dogs in the U.S. has arthritis and that it is one of the most common causes of chronic pain that veterinarians treat?** The condition in dogs becomes evident as they age, but proper care and treatment can help control your “best friend’s” pain and maintain her quality of life.

## TELLTALE SIGNS OF ARTHRITIS

Here are the key signs to look for:

- Your dog used to drag you down the street on walks; now he lags behind.
- She appears to have difficulty sitting or standing.
- He doesn't bounce up when awakened or at feedings.
- She is less interested in playing.
- He is hesitant to jump onto furniture or a bed, or climb stairs.
- She limps, or favors a limb.
- He expresses pain by whimpering when his legs are touched.
- She sleeps more than she used to.
- His behavior has changed.



## CARING FOR YOUR DOG

A dog with arthritis requires extra care. A pet bed made from orthopaedic foam offers comfort; raised food and water bowls require less bending; and taking walks on softer surfaces, like grass, reduces joint impact. It's also important that your pet maintain a healthy weight through diet and exercise, as excess pounds increase pressure on joints.

## AVAILABLE TREATMENTS

Under no circumstances should you give your dog “people” medication – even common, over-the-counter drugs like aspirin can be toxic. Supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin and a veterinarian-prescribed nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) may help decrease pain, but always consult your veterinarian before administering.

## PAYING FOR TREATMENT

Pet health insurance can ease the burden of paying out of pocket for vet bills. But be sure to carefully check the specifics of a policy before you sign up for coverage. Some pet health insurance companies have exclusions for pre-existing conditions such as arthritis. If you don't have pet insurance, you may be able to negotiate a payment plan with your vet.

Visit [www.arthritis.org/arthritispetstories](http://www.arthritis.org/arthritispetstories) for more information.