



“I’m Fine” – Dogs Keep Secrets when Pain is a Problem

No pet owner wants their pet to be in pain, and yet a reality of working in veterinary medicine is that we see dogs come in all the time with painful conditions. It’s heartbreaking to have to inform pet parents that their furry friend has been managing with discomfort, and so we thought it was time to highlight pain in dogs – what it looks like, and what might be causing it.

More than anything – dogs love to please their people! They love eating, and playing and sleeping – and anything that could get in the way of that, might get suppressed. While some dogs are tougher and some a little wimpier, we know that generally, dogs often hide and tolerate pain, not ideal for addressing what’s bothering them. We want to take a proactive approach to managing painful pets which means, we need to educate and empower dog owners with the signs to look for!



Dogs are truly creatures of habit. When dogs are in pain you may notice:

- Sleeping longer than usual, or being generally less active
 - Pacing or restlessness at night, unable to get comfortable or settled
 - Limping, slower movements, avoidance of jumping on the couch or using stairs
 - Decrease in regular interests; toys, other pets, play time, walks
 - Avoidance of people, or clinginess to people
 - Decrease in appetite or dropping food when they are eating
 - Increased aggression – growling, lunging, snapping or biting
 - Hiding in spots they wouldn’t normally go (ie. under a bed or in a hallway away from the action)
 - Shivering or trembling
- Having “accidents” inside the house
- Vomiting or dry-heaving
- Licking their paws incessantly or focusing on one spot, licking/biting/scratching at it excessively
- Making sounds you haven’t heard them make before (yelping, whimpering, howling etc.)
- Any other changes (no matter how small) in regular personality, behaviour or routines
- Changes in breathing patterns (either panting that doesn’t correspond to exertion; fast, shallow breathing; or labored breathing that appears to require more effort than normal)



- Squinting or changes in pupils

Noting any of these things – especially in combination – requires a visit to the veterinarian.

Some of the most common causes of pain in dogs are dental disease, joint disease, disc disease (back pain), knee issues, urinary/bladder problems, abdominal (kidney, stomach, pancreas, intestinal) issues, infections (commonly ear, anal glands, skin), eye and, unfortunately, cancer (multiple forms).

A dog showing signs of pain may indicate a serious problem and, the sooner you can get them examined by your veterinarian, the better. Be careful not to medicate at home – many common human pain-relievers are toxic to dogs. Dogs are not small, furry humans!

A dog owner who pays close attention to changes is going to be able to proactively support their dogs' well-being before a health concern gets out of control. We appreciate you taking the time to educate yourself on what to look for and hope that this list will help you to keep your dog feeling at its best!



We hope you all have a safe and happy holiday season and wish you all the best in the New Year!

From:

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