

IS YOUR CAT IN PAIN?

Cats have a tendency to hide when they're not feeling well, so it can be challenging to detect or see subtle changes in your cat. Their survival instinct gives them a unique ability to cover a painful condition, and, because cats are such masters at hiding pain, it's a good idea to follow an established timeline for veterinary examinations.



Research has shown that many more cats are suffering from osteoarthritis than we are aware of, especially cats past the age of 11. Diagnosing osteoarthritis in cats can be difficult. Your veterinarian will rely on you to tell her about changes you've noticed in your cat.

Signs Your Cat May Be In Pain

Let us know if your cat is moving around less, not climbing or jumping on and off of things as well, or if you have noticed any changes in his behavior. Other things to be aware of and look for include weight loss, loss of appetite, depression, change in general attitude, poor grooming habits, and urinating or defecating outside the litter box. A common sign of osteoarthritis in dogs is limping, but this sign is not seen as often in cats.

Osteoarthritis can affect the joints of cats, including the elbows, hips, shoulders, and ankles. But, arthritis of the back bones & sternum is more common in cats.

Treatment

There are fewer pharmaceutical options available to treat pain and osteoarthritis in cats. And, compared to other species, cats have a lower tolerance and higher risk of toxicity with most drugs. Some treatments to consider include:

- If your cat is overweight, we can design a weight loss program which may include increasing exercise or play
- Move food and water dishes to a more convenient location
- Provide soft or therapeutic bedding
- Purchase a litter box with low sides, cut down high sides, or construct a ramp around the box to help your cat gain entry into the box more easily

It's important to be aware of changes in your cat's behavior, especially as your cat ages. If your cat doesn't seem to be her normal self, discuss the changes with us.