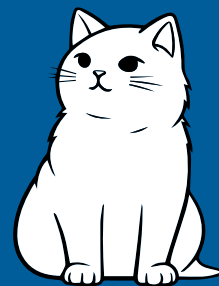




pennsauken
animal hospital
& URGENT CARE



ALL ABOUT CAT ARTHRITIS: WHAT TO KNOW AND HOW TO TREAT





At Pennsauken Animal Hospital, we advise cat owners to record a yearly video of their cat engaging in various activities: walking, running, climbing stairs, jumping, and playing. Keep these videos for your veterinarian to review annually to assess any new pain or joint stiffness progression.

Cat arthritis is a prevalent issue leading to discomfort and painful joints in cats. While there's no cure for it, you can take measures to improve your cat's well-being. If you observe your cat moving slower or displaying signs of discomfort, promptly schedule an appointment with your veterinarian.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ARTHRITIS IN CATS?

Typically, the bones in your cat's body move smoothly, safeguarded by healthy joint fluid and cartilage. However, in cases of arthritis, the once smooth surfaces wear down, leading to bones rubbing against each other, resembling sandpaper.

Symptoms include:

- Reluctance to jump up or down
- Trouble navigating stairs
- Limping
- Leg stiffness, particularly after periods of rest
- Challenges with using the litter box
- Increased irritability
- Decreased activity
- Reduced grooming time
- Lower jump height
- More frequent hiding or increased sleep

CAUSES OF CAT ARTHRITIS:

Some of the most common factors that increase the risk of arthritis in cats are:

- **Wear and Tear.** As cats age, their joints may weaken over time.
- **Abnormalities.** Abnormal hip development may affect cartilage around joints.
- **Injury.** Cats may develop arthritis if they suffer from a joint fracture or joint injury.
- **Obesity.** While there is no scientific evidence that obesity causes arthritis, it may make the condition worse.
- **Genetics.** Some cat breeds have an increased risk of arthritis due to abnormal development of the hips or cartilage. This is most common in Maine Coon, Persian, Scottish Fold, and, Siamese cats.

ARTHRITIS IN BACK LEGS:

Arthritis can impact various areas of a cat's body, with the legs being a common target. When arthritis affects a cat's hind legs, it can significantly restrict their mobility. This may lead to lameness, causing the cat to limp or favor one leg while walking. Consequently, cats with arthritis tend to be less active and spend more time resting.

A qualified veterinarian can assess if a cat has arthritis in their hind legs and create a suitable treatment plan. Most cats do not overtly exhibit signs of arthritis, often concealing their discomfort even when they are suffering. This behavior can make it difficult to detect any underlying issues.

HOW IS CAT ARTHRITIS DIAGNOSED?

If a veterinarian suspects arthritis in your cat, they will review the medical history and conduct a physical examination, focusing on:

- Visible Joint Deformity
- Joint Pain
- Reduced Range of Motion
- Grating (Scraping Noise) When Joints Move
- Presence of Fluid in Joints
- Joint Instability

To confirm a diagnosis of arthritis in your cat, the veterinarian will conduct an X-ray to capture images of the cat's internal body, specifically focusing on their bones.

HOW IS CAT ARTHRITIS TREATED?

There are a few different treatment options available for cats with arthritis:

- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):**
 - *The primary treatment for cat arthritis, prescribed by a licensed veterinarian who determines the appropriate type and duration of the treatment.*
- **Pain management medication:**
 - *In situations where NSAIDs are not suitable or insufficient, cats may receive pain relief medication.*
- **Injectable joint protectants:**
 - *Veterinarians administer glycosaminoglycan injections approximately every four weeks to alleviate arthritic pain in cats.*
- **Acupuncture:**
 - *While research on acupuncture for cat arthritis is limited, some cats may find relief from this ancient Chinese healing practice, involving needle placement at specific body points to alleviate pain.*
- **Cold laser therapy, or photobiomodulation (PBMT):**
 - *This non-invasive and painless treatment involves a small device emitting therapeutic light waves moved across the cat's fur by a vet, reducing inflammation and alleviating pain.*

If you suspect your cat has arthritis, consulting a licensed veterinarian is crucial to determine the most suitable treatment.

NATURAL REMEDIES FOR CAT ARTHRITIS

Supporting a cat with arthritis involves creating a cozy and secure environment. You can achieve this by:

- Providing a soft, warm bed that is easily accessible for your cat.
- Installing a ramp to their favorite resting spots like your bed, couch, or a window perch.
- Ensuring the litter box has at least one low side.
- Keeping all essential items, such as food, water, and the litter box, on the same floor.
- Using gentle brushes for grooming.
- Helping them maintain a healthy weight to reduce joint stress.

By observing subtle signs like difficulty jumping or sudden litter box issues, you can potentially identify problems early. The sooner you address cat arthritis, the better the outcome. If you suspect your cat is experiencing pain or arthritis, make an appointment with your veterinarian promptly.

