



THE EVF TIMES

EGLINTON VETERINARY FACILITIES

DECEMBER 2012

DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE

One of the common medical conditions that we see in our veterinary practice is degenerative joint disease (DJD). Depending upon whom you talk to in the veterinary world, the terms 'arthritis,' 'osteoarthritis' and 'degenerative joint disease' may be used to describe the same thing. Many of you will be familiar with one or all of these terms.

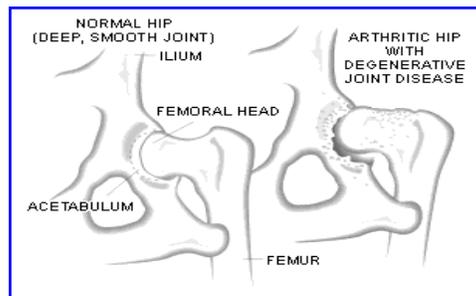


What would we typically hear in our exam room from owners of pets with DJD?

- ⇒ “My dog is getting up more slowly after she sleeps”
- ⇒ “He just doesn’t seem to want to go for long walks anymore”
- ⇒ “My cat used to jump on the bed and onto the kitchen counter, but now she cannot do it”

Degenerative joint disease is characterized by the loss of the smooth cartilage that covers and protects the end of the bones in a movable joint. When one area of cartilage touches the cartilage of another bone, there is no pain, as cartilage contains no nerves. However, if the cartilage wears away, bone is exposed; as bone does have nerves, a touch between the two bones in a joint results in pain and inflammation (the release of chemicals causing further damage, along with symptoms). Animals with joint disease may also form small bony projections (osteophytes) on bone that is close to the joint. This adds to the pain.

Damage to the joint cartilage due to trauma is not confined to any particular species, age or breed, therefore, any pet is at risk of developing DJD.



Dogs do appear to develop DJD more commonly than cats, and there are certain dogs more at risk including:

- Large or giant breeds
- Dogs of breeds pre-disposed to developmental disorders such as hip or elbow dysplasia
- Overweight/inactive dogs
- Dogs that have suffered joint injuries (e.g. greyhounds/other athletic dogs)

Symptoms of DJD in dogs are variable and depend on the severity of the problem, the dog’s personality and lifestyle, and whether they are affected in multiple joints. Affected dogs may have difficulty exercising, lameness, decreased muscle mass and/or decreased ability to bend or extend the affected joint. **CONTINUED PG 2**



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Like dogs, any cat with a congenital joint problem is going to be more prone to developing degenerative joint disease. Cats which have had an injury to a joint such as a fracture will also be more likely to develop arthritis.

Our feline friends are generally more subtle than their canine counterparts in displaying signs of pain. Some cats with DJD may alter their gait or behavior slightly, seek warm and soft places to sleep, bite or chew at the affected area, and occasionally show changes in appetite.

The diagnosis of DJD is based on a pet's symptoms, a thorough orthopedic exam and review of their medical history.

Certain tests such as x-rays or collection of joint fluid may be performed to determine the cause of joint disorders. Blood work is also often recommended to rule out other medical causes of abnormal behavior and to develop a baseline measure of organ function prior to the start of a treatment plan.

Treatment for DJD in both dogs and cats may be conservative or surgical, however, the former is much more common in older pets. The aim of conservative management is to increase muscle strength and range of motion in the joint, promote cartilage repair and metabolism, and decrease pain.

A treatment plan may include weight management strategies, controlled exercise, physical therapy (swimming, laser therapy, etc.) and pain management. Surgical treatment options include surgical reconstruction, replacement or fusion of the joint. Factors such as species, age, activity level and the presence or absence of other disease conditions will all be considered in making a treatment plan. Although there are many supplements and pain medications available for the management of DJD in dogs, our options in cats are limited due to their unique sensitivity to medications and the difficulty that most cat owners have in giving their pets treatments by mouth.

PLEASE ASK US ABOUT WAYS TO HELP YOUR PET WITH JOINT PAIN ...

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE NUTRACEUTICALS such as glucosamine & omega fatty acids

NON-INVASIVE LASER THERAPY available to decrease pain and inflammation

DVM CORNER:



Did you know that an average of 70-80% of pets have some degree of dental disease by the time they are two years of age? Plaque and tartar built up on our pets' teeth contains bacteria that can not only lead to bad breath (halitosis), but also more serious health problems. Excess tartar (and bacteria) can cause gum and tooth infections, but can also get into the bloodstream and cause disease elsewhere in the body. Serious dental infections can often lead to heart, liver, and kidney disease if they are not treated appropriately. Quite often the veterinarians here at EVF will

DR. PAUL HODGES

recommend your pet have a dental cleaning performed at our hospital. A dental cleaning allows us to clean all of the tartar off of your pet's teeth (both on the visible part of the tooth as well as just under the gumline where it cannot be seen), and requires a general anesthetic to perform. The team at EVF also strongly believes in and recommends home care as the best way to maintain your pets oral health. Examples of home care include: brushing your pets teeth, special dental diets that clean your pets teeth while they chew (e.g. Hills t/d), and dental treats and chews. The most common question we are asked is ***"how do I know which treats and chews are actually good for my pet's teeth?"***



We recommend dental health products that have been approved by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC). Products approved by the VOHC will have their seal of approval right on the bag (the logo you see here).

Your pet's health is our primary concern at EVF. Please do not hesitate to ask our team if you have any questions or concerns about the oral health of your pet.



TECH TALK: WINTER HAZARDS !!!

Winter is a great time of year. The holidays are just around the corner and the cold nights invite us to spend quality cuddle time with our furry friends. Unfortunately winter brings some seasonal hazards to your pets.

Anti-freeze: This may be the most widely known danger (ethylene glycol). Anti-freeze has a sweet taste which attracts pets to it, and it only takes a very small amount for it to do irreparable damage. Once ingested, ethylene glycol absorbs rapidly into the bloodstream (often within one hour of ingestion), and is profoundly toxic. Signs of ingestion can be stumbling, vomiting, and depression (as if they were intoxicated by alcohol). Although antifreeze can affect multiple organs, the kidneys are the most at risk, as they are the filter for toxins from the body. With anti-freeze ingestion, kidney failure can occur anywhere from 12 to 24 hours after ingestion. The end result is extensive kidney damage or death.

Rock salt and Ice melts: These products have also been shown to be toxic to pets. If eaten, they can cause gastrointestinal inflammation and upset. To prevent this from happening, always wipe off and clean your pet's paws when they come in from a walk. This can also help avoid any skin irritation from prolonged exposure to ice melting chemicals. Never let your pet drink from puddles on walks as the melted snow may be contaminated with rock salt.



Decorations: Cats like to play with and occasionally eat ribbons off presents or the tinsel off of trees. Both can be very dangerous and can cause intestinal obstructions or perforations resulting in emergency surgery. **Open flames** can pose an obvious threat; if lighting the menorah, candles, or fire place, make sure there is diligent supervision, for everyone's sake.



Holiday plants: Pointsettias, mistletoe and holly add to the festive spirit but are toxic to pets. Be very mindful if these are in your home and keep them well out of reach.

Family meals: During your big family dinners, please be proactive and ask your guests to *not* feed your pet from the table. This can help prevent gastrointestinal upset and possible toxic ingestion (such as onions, chocolate, grapes). **Chocolate** makes a nice gift but is *very* toxic and can be deadly to dogs.

Cold weather: Leaving your pet outside or in a car in the cold weather can result in frostbite, or more seriously, hypothermia. Please be mindful of the outside temperature, and remember that senior pets may experience increased joint pain in cold weather.



FIRST AID KITS AND YOUR PET:

Oh no, she's cut herself... Oh no, he's lame in the back end...

If you have a family pet, you have most likely uttered these words at some point.

Question is, were you or are you prepared to deal with minor injuries and wounds until you can reach a veterinarian?

We tend to remember that a first aid kit is important to have available for ourselves and our "people" children. What about our four legged kids, who storm around relatively unprotected? Would you be able to dress and disinfect a wound or stabilize a broken or injured limb until you can reach emergency vet care?

A first aid kit is never a substitute for professional veterinary care, but it can certainly give you a leg up when it comes to dealing with the initial stages of an injury or wound.

There are various types of kits commercially available to pet owners, from species specific to purpose specific. You can also put together your own customized first aid kit that is specific to your pet and its needs.

Visit our website at www.eglintonvet.com for a list of first aid kit essentials.

HOLIDAY WISHES FROM THE EVF STAFF...

Dr. Jen Hodges

Shaun Gieland

Dr. Bob Brennan

[Signature]

Sandra Neave
Dr. Paul

[Signature]

HARVEY HARRIS

*Wishing you a safe and happy holiday
season from all of us at Eglinton Vet!*



[Signature]

DR Bob Walden

[Signature]

[Signature]

Nancy

S. Clifford



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Curtis Counter

Eglinton Vet has a resident cat who we adopted in 2010. At that time, he was obese, weighing in at over 30 lbs!



Curtis weighed in at 7.58kg (16.6lbs) on Sept 8, 2012. We are very proud of him. *Please ask us to meet Curtis.*