

CANINE OSTEOARTHRITIS (OA)

CANACTIVE HYDROTHERAPY FACTSHEET

What is Osteoarthritis (OA)?

OA can be characterised by the deterioration of joint cartilage and the formation of new bone on the joint surfaces and margins, OA can affect any joint, however more active or weightbearing joints are often effected and levels of OA vary greatly between different dogs, with some factors predisposing the dog to OA formation.

What causes OA?

OA can be caused by a multitude of different factors and many of the reasons for its formation are still poorly understood. However researchers have categorised the causes in to two categories:

- Primary OA- An abnormal force on normal cartilage.
- Secondary OA- A normal force on abnormal cartilage.

In dogs, OA is usually caused by a secondary factor.

What are the signs of OA in dogs?

Signs of OA can vary depending on a few factors and all dogs have different level of pain tolerance so they can present in a few different ways. The most common one and the one most often overlooked is generally slowing down, humans often expect this as a dog naturally ages but as it sometimes happens gradually and they see their dog everyday, this symptom can advance without them realising. It may be as simple as not wanting to jump up on the sofa, or not wanting to go for a walk or play with their toys, but even a simple behaviour change can be a big sign that there is some pain or discomfort in the dogs joints.

Other symptoms include more obvious heat, swelling or lameness and often dogs will yelp in pain following certain movements if they are in discomfort.



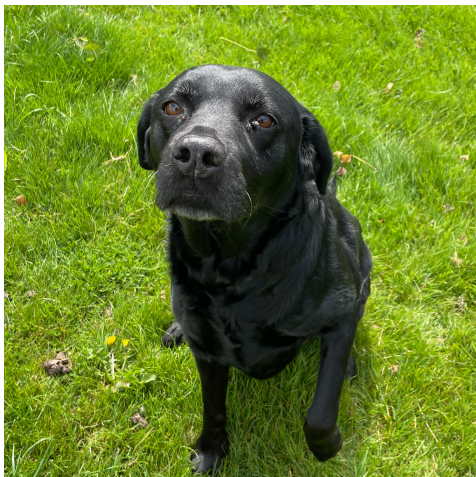
What are the predisposing factors to OA?

There are a few predisposing factors that can increase the likelihood of your dog having OA changes, These include:

- Other injuries such as elbow or hip dysplasia, cruciate surgery or Luxating patella surgery or any joint surgery.
- Compensatory injuries that put more pressure on a joint.
- Breed type- certain breeds such as Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, German Shepherd, Rottweiler, French Bulldog, Newfoundland, and Bernese Mountain Dogs have a higher OA. This is not an exhaustive list; any breed of dog, including mix breeds, can develop OA, but certain breeds should be monitored more closely.
- Being overweight or obese.
- Spayed or neutered, especially prior to skeletal maturity.
- High impact, repetitive activity causing repetitive abnormal forces to the joints, such as jumping down, twisting, or spinning causing an increased risk of ligament sprains that could lead to joint instability and OA.
- History of joint infections or systemic infection such as tick-borne disease
- Autoimmune disease

What treatment options are available for OA?

There are many different treatment options for OA and your vet will advise on the best course of action taking in to account the severity, the animals age and if they have any other health conditions. Non steroidal anti inflammatory medications are most often prescribed, however these can have side effects so it is worth discussing with your vet about the best option for your pet.



CASE STUDY

Sachin is a 10 year old Labrador who has had a busy life living and working on a farm. Her owners started to notice she didn't want to jump up in to the back of the truck or come out in the morning to check the animals, so took her to vets who diagnosed that she had arthritic changes in her hips and spondylosis along her spine. The vet started her on Non steroidal anti-inflammatories and advised that she visit a hydrotherapy centre. She came to see us 6 months ago and loved the water and treats. With a few lifestyle changes including a ramp, she was soon back out exploring the farm and her owners noticed she was more willing to play with their other dogs and get involved with interaction in the house.

What can I do to prevent OA in my dog?

OA can seem inevitable for older dogs who has lived an active lifestyle, especially if they are a larger or more at risk breed. However there are things you can do right from the first day you bring your new dog home to prevent OA catching up with them in later life!

- Fish oil or omega 3/6 supplements such as Yumove360 or Salmon oil (Speak to your vet for further guidance).
- Allowing cool down and warm up time on walks
- Preventing repetitive ball play and switching it up for scent games or waiting for a ball to stop before chasing.
- Supportive exercise such as hydrotherapy to identify any issues early on and build up muscle strength correctly.

How does hydrotherapy help?

Hydrotherapy offers a low impact exercise, which allows the handler to control movement in a positive way to build muscle and support movement with less weight going through the joint. This is beneficial for patients with OA as the warm water helps relax the muscles and joints while the movement strengthens them to ensure the muscles are there to support the joint. The movement of the joint also encourages positive movement within the joint and an increased range of motion compared to that which they may not be able to perform on land, this can then prevents further joint stiffness.

There are also often compensations throughout the rest of the body and the treadmill allows hydrotherapists to examine gait patterns and help improve the dogs stride, preventing imbalances ensuring the dog is moving correctly and therefore removing any overexertion which may lead to strain on other structures.

Please contact us for further information at canactivecentre@gmail.com

