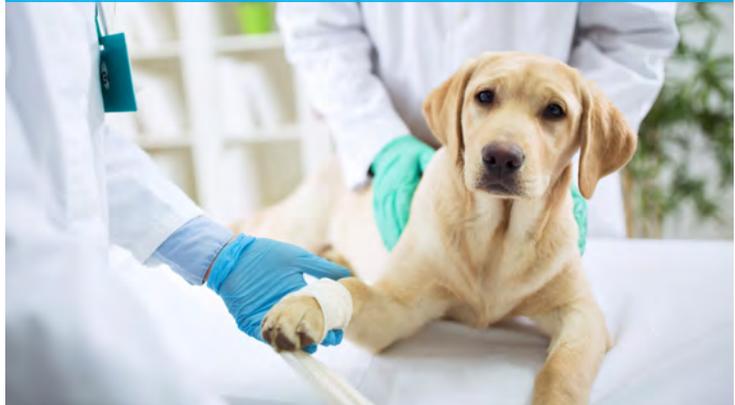


# Is your pet slowing down? Could it be chronic pain?

Pain is one of the terrible life experiences we want to avoid at all costs in our beloved pets, but as pet owners, how would we know if our dog or cat is suffering?

There are two types of pain – acute and chronic. Acute pain is more easily recognized – it usually happens after an injury or surgery. Chronic pain is more challenging because it develops more subtly. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of chronic pain in cats and dogs. It occurs very gradually, and many pets won't show obvious limping, especially cats.

If you suspect your pet might be in pain, it's important to address it and visit your veterinarian



## How would you know if your pet is in pain?

You are the best person to notice changes in your pet's habits. Look for signs such as sleeping more, moving less and refusing to do things they used to love, like jumping in the car or on the window sill. There may be obvious signs of pain like limping, yelping or avoiding contact. Pain affects quality of life and should be taken care of as soon as possible.

## What can you do if you think your pet is in pain?

- **Take your pet to your veterinary clinic for a physical examination.** Your veterinarian will assess general health and look for the source of pain. The veterinary team might recommend diagnostic tests to identify the problem.
- **Don't give your pet any medication without talking to your veterinarian first!** Many human medications are toxic to pets and should never be given. Your veterinarian will recommend specific pain medications at the right dose.
- **For long-term pain management, veterinarians recommend a multi-modal approach.** That means that your pet will do better with a combination of medication(s), precise nutrition and controlled exercise. Another critical comfort factor is ensuring that your pet has a healthy weight. Don't wait to have your pet's body condition assessed by your veterinary team because prevention can go a long way!

Whether dealing with acute or chronic pain, it's really important to address it and get your pet comfortable. Let's make sure our pets live the best, pain-free lives possible!

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