

OAK FOREST Veterinary Hospital

Pet Talk

Fall 2023



Aches and Pains

Osteoarthritis and Your Senior Dog

If your aging dog is having difficulty getting up, limps after resting, appears stiff, or seems reluctant to walk, run or climb stairs, osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease (DJD) is likely the cause. The Arthritis Foundation estimates that DJD affects one in five dogs in the U.S.

Smooth cartilage normally protects the bones in your dog's movable joints, acting as a cushion to allow smooth and painless movement. Age and other factors can cause cartilage to wear down over time. Pain and inflammation is the result as bone-to-bone friction begins to occur.

In addition to age, osteoarthritis can be caused by injuries, obesity, congenital disorders such as hip dysplasia and patella luxation, and other factors. If your dog is showing symptoms, we can diagnose DJD based on a physical exam and his or her medical history. We may recommend X-rays to determine how much the disease has progressed.

DJD is permanent and progressive; however, there are approaches we can take to slow its progression and keep your dog more comfortable. Certain foods and supplements may reduce the symptoms of arthritis, and maintaining a healthy weight will minimize stress on the joints. Light to moderate exercise can also help keep the joints more limber. Other treatments that may bring relief include massage, acupuncture, and physical rehabilitation. Some conditions, such as patella luxation, can be helped with surgery. We may also prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs or pain medication to help alleviate symptoms.

If you suspect that osteoarthritis is causing your dog discomfort, be sure to provide a warm and comfortable place to rest and see us soon for an exam. Your veterinarian can guide you on what treatments are appropriate for your dog.



Goose Honks

Preparing for Snakebites

Hi . . . it's me! Goose again. I'm sure you already know this, but my dad, Tyler, loves to hunt. He thinks that's why my name is Goose but really Mom, Dr. Moore, says it's after some guy in Top Gun (whatever that is. . . still sounds like hunting to me). Anyway. . . what was I saying. . .

Oh yeah! Hunting. So, we used to go to this place in the country where Dad could go hunting. I got to go too and was the smallest dog there. But I could run around free with all these hunting dogs. Mom was always telling me to stay away from the high grass and worried about snakes.

Mom said that if I get bit by a snake, we would have to immediately go to the closest emergency clinic. There is something called Antivenom that can be given to help with the poison. Apparently, it's pretty expensive, so not all places carry it. If you go hunting, you should have a list of nearby veterinary hospitals that carry Antivenom.

The other really important thing is pain relief. Snake bites hurt a lot and need a lot of pain medications that only a vet clinic would have. There is also a vaccine for Rattlesnakes, but it doesn't mean you don't need to seek emergency care.

We don't go to that duck lease anymore. I miss it. It was so peaceful. Except for the gun shots. But the food was really good. . . now I'm hungry. Again.

Goose



Collapsing Trachea

A Common Problem in Small Breed Dogs

If you own a small breed dog, you may have encountered the puzzling symptoms of tracheal collapse. Most characteristic of these is a honking cough that sounds something like a goose. Although episodes are usually brief, they can seem frightening to you and your dog.

This odd noise is caused by weakness in the trachea—a tube-like conduit for air travelling to and from the lungs. The airway is supported by flexible, c-shaped rings of cartilage that can begin to weaken, interrupting airflow to the lungs. Although the trachea generally doesn't close off completely, your dog may need to gasp to push air through the narrowed channel.

In addition to the "goose honk" cough, you may observe poor exercise tolerance and labored breathing. Eating, drinking, excitement or active play can trigger the coughing. Hot, humid weather, obesity, and irritants such as smoke can worsen symptoms.

The causes of this condition are unknown, although there is likely a genetic predisposition. Symptoms can present at any age and may get worse with age. Any breed can suffer from the condition, but it is most common among toy and small breeds such as the Yorkshire Terrier, Pomeranian, Shih Tzu, Maltese and Chihuahua.

Tracheal narrowing can sometimes be seen on an x-ray; however, a fluoroscopy may be recommended to observe airflow through the trachea. Fortunately, tracheal collapse often responds to treatment. We may prescribe medications to reduce inflammation and coughing, and antibiotics if an infection is present. Severe cases may require surgery to insert a stent that helps support the collapsing trachea.

Pet owners can help diminish the symptoms through weight loss, monitoring your dog's exercise and excitement, and using a harness instead of a collar to prevent pressure on the trachea. Calming your dog during an attack is also important since anxiety can exacerbate the symptoms. Be sure to let us know if you have observed symptoms of tracheal collapse in your dog.



Senior Cat Care

Aging Is Not a Disease!



Although cats' bodies go through changes as they advance in years, aging is a natural process and not a disease. Many cats begin to exhibit physical changes between seven and 10 years of age. The key to ensuring a happy, healthy life for your senior cat is to recognize and reduce health risks. It's important that we detect diseases early so we can correct the condition or delay its progression.

Cats today are living well into their teens and beyond, but they are considered elderly at 10 years old and will age at the rate of about 5 human years annually. Geriatric cats can suffer from health issues such as arthritis, kidney disease, diabetes, thyroid problems, cancer and senility. Kidney failure is a leading cause of death in older cats. We recommend increased hydration and may recommend a specially formulated diet as your kitty enters its senior years.

Hyperthyroidism and diabetes are also common health challenges, as are skin and eye problems. Dental disease is particularly common, and regular cleanings will be critical to your cat's comfort.

As with humans, senior cats often experience some loss of vision, hearing, and ability to smell. They move and respond more slowly and may miss the litter box on occasion. Older felines may experience cognitive dysfunction leading to confusion or anxiety, especially in response to any changes in routine. Providing a stable and comfortable environment and practicing patience are the best ways to help your kitty.

The good news is that most geriatric conditions can be managed if diagnosed early. Remember that your cat is aging much faster than humans do. You wouldn't wait five years between doctor's visits at this age, and neither should your cat. Senior kitties need to see us at least twice annually so we can detect illness early on.

Call us at (713) 682-6351 today to make an appointment!

A Troubling Epidemic

Is Your Pet Affected?

Pet obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the U.S., ruining the well-being of otherwise healthy cats and dogs. It's estimated that 59% of pets in the U.S. are overweight. For dogs, that's an increase of 159% in just 10 years! The rate of increase for cats is even higher. Unfortunately, obese pets live approximately 2.5 years less than those with a healthy weight.

In addition to decreased lifespan, other health risks of obesity include:

- 🐾 Osteoarthritis
- 🐾 Diabetes
- 🐾 High Blood Pressure
- 🐾 Heart and Respiratory Disease
- 🐾 Cranial Cruciate Ligament (Knee) Injury
- 🐾 Kidney Disease
- 🐾 Some Forms of Cancer
- 🐾 Emotional Stress
- 🐾 Physical Pain



A survey by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) found that the owners of overweight pets often believe incorrectly that their pets' weight is "normal." In what the APOP calls a "fat pet gap," 90% of cat owners and 95% of dog owners did not identify their overweight pets as obese.

The health risks of those extra pounds are real—but we can help! Ask us if your dog or cat is at a healthy weight on your next visit, or make an appointment for a general health check if you suspect your pet is carrying some extra pounds. We can recommend a diet and exercise program to help them maintain a more appropriate weight and better overall health.

Refer a Friend and Save!

Refer a new client and save \$10 on your next doctor's visit.

Be sure to mention the refer-a-friend savings when you make your appointment.

Microchip Savings

\$10 Savings

on Microchipping

(includes registration in the national database)

Increase the likelihood that your pet will be returned to you!

Not valid with any other offer.
Expires 11/30/2023

Senior Wellness Savings

\$20 Savings

for Canine and Feline

Senior Wellness Profile includes bloodwork, urinalysis and thyroid check

Not valid with any other offer.
Expires 11/30/2023

Drop-off Savings

Save 5%

on morning drop-offs for "routine" veterinary services.

Expires 11/30/2023.



When you're here, you're family.

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Call (713) 682-6351
today to make an appointment!

PROTECT YOUR LITTLE GOBLIN



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