Osteoarthritis – what is it and what should you look out for?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the defined as a progressive and degenerative disease of joints.

Things that happen in the disease process include bone changes, cartilage degradation and other soft tissue structure degeneration (such as ligaments). It will usually occur due to an underlying condition such as hip to elbow dysplasia, cruciate ligament injury, knee cap issues, fractures, limb deformities, genetic predisposition or obesity and diet. We will diagnose OA through physical exam, a thorough musculoskeletal exam and xrays.

Osteoarthritis is a painful condition and it is progressive, meaning that it will keep getting worse and can not be reversed. The pain experienced in the disease is not only from the bone and joints affected but also from nerve pain and muscular pain.

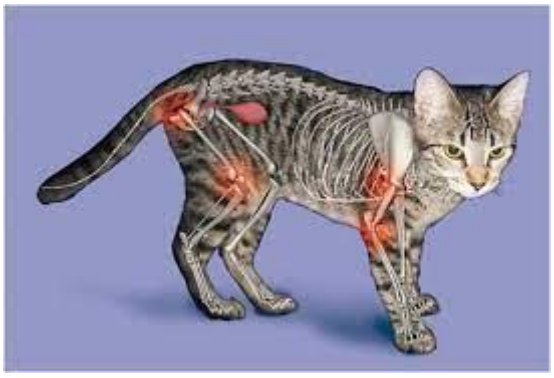
Pain will show itself in many ways in animals and there is the added complication of not being able to ask then how they feel and where it hurts. Some of the behaviours you can keep an eye out for include:

DOGS

- Abnormal posture
- Restlessness/anxiety
- Bracing of abdomen
- Abnormal vocalisation
- Lameness
- Reluctance to move
- Reduced appetite
- Increased respiratory rate/panting
- Hypersalivation
- Pupillary dilation
- Yawning

CATS

- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Withdrawing
- Vocalising
- Flattened ears
- Immobility
- Lack of grooming



Luckily we have many treatment options for osteoarthritis these days including medications such as anti-inflammatories, other pain relievers, structure modifying agents such as Synovan and supplements such as Antinol and 4Cyte.

There are also manual therapy options such as acupuncture and dry needling among many others. We treat every case independently based on the animals symptoms and response to certain treatments. The goal is to make your pets as comfortable and as happy as possible so that their lives can be enjoyed to the max.

Dr Edwina