

# How to Tell if Your Dog is in Pain.

Dogs feel pain for many of the same reasons as humans: infections, dental problems, arthritis, bone disease and cancer. They also feel discomfort following surgical procedures.

Unfortunately, unlike humans, they are unable to speak to us about when and where they hurt.

You are in the best position to look for the subtle changes in behavior that may indicate your pet is suffering. It's important to stay alert to these signs, because the sooner your dog's pain is diagnosed and treated, the sooner he or she can heal and resume a normal, happy life.

If your dog shows one or more of these behaviors and you suspect it may be due to pain, notify your veterinarian immediately.



## Vocalizing:

- Whining
- Howling
- Whimpering
- Yelping
- Groaning
- Grunting

## Daily Habits:

- Decreased appetite
- Withdraws from social interaction
- Changes in sleeping or drinking
- Lapses in housetraining
- Sleeps more

## Self-Mutilation:

- Licking
- Biting
- Scratching a particular part of its body

## Activity Level:

- Restless
- Reluctant to move
- Difficulty getting up from a laying position
- Repetitively gets up and lies down
- Trembling, circling or lying very still
- Seeks more affection than usual

## Facial Expression:

- Grimaces, vacant stare
- Glazed, wide-eyed or looks sleepy
- Enlarged pupils
- Flattened ears
- Pants excessively when at rest

## Grooming:

- Coat lacks normal shine
- Hair stands up in places

## Self-Protection:

- Protects a body part
- Doesn't put weight on a limb
- Limp
- Doesn't want to be held or picked up
- Hides

## Aggressive:

*especially a previously friendly dog*

- Acts out of character
- Growls, hisses, bites
- Pins ears back
- A normally aggressive dog may act quiet, docile

## Posture:

- Hunched, with hindquarters raised and front end down on the ground
- Lays on its side

# Don't Treat Your Dog's Pain by Yourself!

Never administer pain medication to a pet without consulting with your veterinarian. After diagnosing the problem, your veterinarian will explain the benefits, risks and costs associated with various treatment options. That way, you and your veterinarian can choose the approach that best meets the needs of you and your dog.

## If Your Veterinarian Prescribes a Pain Medication:

### Do

- follow your veterinarian's instructions.
- watch for possible side effects, including:
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Blood in stools (the stool appears black, tarry, like it contains coffee grounds)
  - Change in drinking or urinating
  - Change in behavior, such as depression, restlessness or appetite loss
  - Yellowing of gums, skin or whites of eyes
  - Changes in skin (redness, scabs or scratching)
- **stop medicating immediately** if your dog shows any of these symptoms and **call your veterinarian** at once.
- keep the drug safely out of reach of your pets and children.



### Don't

- change the dosage or frequency unless directed by your veterinarian.
- give any other drug to your dog while it is taking the pain medication (without first talking to your veterinarian).
- hesitate to call your veterinarian if you ever have questions or concerns.

*Healthy, Happy Pets are Our Business!*

# How to Tell if Your Cat is in Pain.

Cats often disguise the fact they are in pain. That may be because in the wild, cats that appear sick or injured are vulnerable to predators.

Cat pain can be caused by such things as arthritis, dental problems, urinary tract infections, bone disease and cancer. Pain is also common following a surgical procedure.

You are in the best position to look for the subtle changes in behavior that may indicate your cat is suffering. It's important to stay alert, because the sooner your cat's pain is diagnosed and treated, the sooner he or she can heal and resume a normal, happy life.

If your cat exhibits one or more of these behaviors and you suspect it may be due to pain, notify your AAHA-accredited veterinary practice immediately.



## Vocalizing:

- Meowing
- Purring
- Hissing
- Growling

## Daily Habits:

- Withdraws from social interaction
- Decreased appetite
- Changes in sleeping or drinking
- Fails to use the litter box
- Urinates frequently
- Won't groom or grooms less, looks unkempt
- Sleeps more

## Self-Mutilation:

- Licking
- Biting
- Scratching a particular part of its body

## Activity Level:

- Restless
- Reluctant to move
- Has difficulty getting up from a laying position
- Repetitively gets up and lies down
- Trembles or shakes
- Limp
- Can't leap as high
- Seeks more affection
- Avoids being petted or handled
- Hides

## Posture:

- Generally lays with feet underneath
- Arches back or tucks in abdomen

## Facial Expression:

- Grimaces, furrowed brow, vacant stare
- Glazed, wide-eyed or looks sleepy
- Enlarged pupils
- Flattened ears
- Pants when at rest

## Self-Protection:

- Protects a part of its body
- Doesn't put weight on a limb
- Doesn't want to be held or picked up

## Aggressive:

- especially a previously friendly cat*
- Acts out of character
  - Growls, hisses, bites
  - Pins ears back

## Don't Treat Your Cat's Pain by Yourself!

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Never administer pain medications to a pet without consulting your veterinarian. Many human pain relievers, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, are poisonous and can be fatal to cats.

Different types of pain require different types of treatment. After diagnosing the problem, your AAHA veterinarian will explain the benefits, risks and costs associated with each option. That way, you and your veterinarian can choose the treatment plan that best meets the needs of you and your cat.

Whenever you have a question or concern about your cat's health, please call us!

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