

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Colder Weather Making Your Joints Ache? Pets can Suffer From Arthritis, Too!**  
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Arthritis is a degenerative and painful condition that affects millions of people in the US. It is even more prevalent in dogs: 1 in 5 adult dogs have it and that number doubles once the dog is older than 7. Up to 90% of all cats aged 12 years and older have radiographic (x-ray) evidence of arthritis! What pet owners should realize is that arthritis in dogs and cats is just as painful as it is in humans.

Arthritis can affect any age, size, or breed of dog and cat. However those most at risk are senior pets (age 7 year and older), large breed dogs, overweight pets, and those with inherited joint abnormalities such as elbow or hip dysplasia.

Because dogs and cats by nature hide their pain, it is often difficult to tell when they have arthritis. Frequently, dog owners overlook the signs of arthritis, calling it simply "old age aches and pains". Signs of arthritis in dogs can include tiring easily on walks, limping, appearing stiff after activity, reluctance to climb steps or jump up, and being slow to rise from a resting position. Cat owners will often misinterpret arthritis as "slowing down" with age. Cats may be reluctant to jump up or down and, because arthritis in cats often affects the same joint on both sides of the body, they may appear to slow down, not groom as much, and be temperamental.

There are ways for you to help your arthritic pet that can be done right at home. Help your pet shed those extra pounds through increased exercise and diet (your veterinarian can help with diet recommendations). A warm soft bed helps soothe aches and pains. A ramp for helping the dog in/out of the car or up stairs will help make a difficult climb easier. For cats it can be as simple as buying or making some steps for cats to reach her favorite perch or the bed.

Your veterinarian has many excellent treatments available to help manage arthritis. These include joint supplements, anti-inflammatories (**never** give your pet over the counter anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen/Tylenol/Aleve as they can be toxic to your pet), acupuncture, and physical therapy.

Your pet doesn't have to suffer in silence. Arthritis can't be cured, but it can be managed with medications, environmental changes to ease discomfort, and TLC. Working with your veterinarian, your pet can have a much better quality of life.

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*The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 340 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine. For more information, visit [www.vtvets.org](http://www.vtvets.org) or call (802) 878-6888.*