

# Pawsitive Press

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- Grouchy/Ouchy 1
- Grouchy/Ouchy Cont'd 2
- Grouchy/Ouchy Cont'd 3
- Coupons 4

**Related Webpages:**

**Oscar the Grouch or Oscar the Ouch?**

**By: Dr. Christen Woodley**

Imagine letting your dog in from the yard and when he comes to you he is limping on one of his legs. You find yourself impulsively checking your medicine cabinet for the usual suspects like Aspirin, Tylenol, Aleve, etc. But before administering anything to your pet, STOP and call us at the Animal Hospital of Dunedin. Your human pain reliever, or even one you may have that was prescribed to another pet in your house, may not be the right choice for every pet and may potentially cause serious harm. Controlling acute and chronic pain in our dogs and cats is very important for their quality of life, but we have to make informed decisions and acknowledge there are some jurisdictions.

Sometimes recognizing that your pet is in pain may not be as obvious as one would think. Most of us will notice a lameness or limp but discomfort can present with more subtlety, especially in our kitties. In cats specifically, it is unlikely that you will ever see a limp, whether that be



in the comfort of your home or in the clinic during our exam when they may be even more apprehensive to move around. Arthritic cats and dogs exhibit less ability to jump up on furniture or access areas of the house like they used to. They may continue to get up on things but then have hesitation or need to ask for assistance to get back down, when they used to sail down with wild abandon.



Both may tend to move around less and sleep a lot more, hide more, display decreased grooming rituals, or even show increased hesitation to be brushed. Cats in particular may start voiding outside of the box due to inability to get up and in. Another common source of pain can be if our pets have

dental disease. This may cause them to chew to one side, swallow food without chewing, take a longer time to eat, or have blood tinged saliva after eating or chewing on a toy, etc. Overall body language can also alert you to your pet being in underlying pain. Some examples may be keeping a hunched position or arched back, carrying their head down and not wanting to look up or to the sides even to greet you or for a treat, hesitation in coming to greet you and standing up or jumping up, vocalizing in anticipation of being picked up, sitting preferentially on one hip more than another, etc.

Acute pain may be seen for a multitude of reasons such as trauma, surgery, athletic injury, etc. The most common cause of chronic pain that we see in dogs and cats is Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD), or Osteoarthritis (OA). Some studies found more than 90 % of cats over the age of 12 have evidence of arthritis. Much like in humans DJD is usually the result of long term stresses on the joints, though there are pets that also suffer from poor conformation since birth.

### Grouchy or Ouchy Cont'd

True diagnosis of OA is made on the basis of radiographs, though the degree of change found on an x ray does not always correlate to clinical pain. Most of the time these changes are irreversible and progressive, therefore treatment is aimed at trying to slow and prevent the progression of the damage and is a multimodal approach.



There are a number of angles from which we can combat pain, especially chronic pain. This does usually involve a variety of medications and supplements, but can also involve modalities such as weight loss, exercise/ physical therapy, laser therapy, chiropractics, and acupuncture. Having an ideal body condition score places less stress on the affected joints. In times of acute pain/trauma, rest is most typically recommended. However, for more chronic pain management, lower impact exercise is often advised to help keep up muscling, range of motion, etc. This can include leash walking, swimming, passive range of motion movements you do at home with your pet, etc. Environmental husbandry can also be done to help decrease pain. You can provide a lower litter box or make a lower opening so your cat doesn't have to jump as high to get in or out. You can place steps to assist in helping your pet get to their favorite resting spot. Try placing food and water bowls on a raised surface so there is less tension on bending the neck down.

For dogs that may have trouble on smooth surfaces in the house you can lay down runner type rugs with grip or purchase booties with grip to help avoid splaying and sliding.

In the majority of acute and chronic cases of pain control, we will need to reach for medication. Please, please, please avoid the do it yourself approach and consult with us before giving your pet any pain medication not prescribed to them. Your pet may have pre-existing medical conditions (such as liver, kidney, cardiac, or gastrointestinal disease, diabetes, etc.) that preclude the safe use of certain classes of drugs. Another concern is that some medications are contraindicated to give together and may create dangerous interactions. Most importantly some over the counter human pain medications may be very toxic to pets (Even just one Tylenol can be fatal to a cat!!!!) In our multimodal approach some of the medications will be nutraceuticals (not FDA regulated/approved and not requiring a prescription) and some will be prescription (such as non steroidal anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), steroids, muscle relaxants, neuropathic pain modulators, etc.).



The most common Nutraceuticals we use aim to help repair damaged cartilage and/or act as a natural anti-inflammatory. Some examples are: Chondroprotectants (Dasuquin with MSM, Cosequin, Glycoflex); Omega Fatty Acids from fish oil; Dried Milk Proteins (Duralactin);

Green Lipped Mussel Extract ; Avocado Soybean Unsaponifiables; Polysulfated glycosaminoglycan (Adequan) and the emerging category of Cannabinoids. For these types of medications onset of action time before you notice visible effects can vary from two to four weeks.

NSAIDS are the most extensively used drug for acute and chronic pain relief in our pets. These include commonly used drugs such as Rimadyl, Deramaxx, Previcox, Meloxicam, and Onsior. They help by inhibiting portions of the inflammatory cascade that is set up when tissues suffer injury. Cats tend to be more sensitive to this class of drugs and can sometimes have issues processing them slower and excreting them without sustaining insult to organs such as the kidneys and liver. Therefore in cats NSAIDS are not used as often and not for extended periods of time, if at all. Though this class of drug is very effective in controlling pain and therefore improving quality of life, there can be a risk of gastrointestinal upset/ulceration, additional stress on the liver and kidneys, etc. The risk of the side effects is lessened when used according to label instructions. We always want you to alert us if you see changes in appetite, thirst, urination, lethargy, vomit or diarrhea, yellowing of the skin gums or eyes, changes in behavior, etc. Sometimes if more pain control is needed beyond the above mentioned options, we may add in a pain reliever such as Tramadol, Gabapentin, or Amantadine. These pain relieving drugs are not often used alone because they do not do anything

**Grouchy or Ouchy Cont'd**

for the actual disease process. They also may have some potential for drowsiness. In certain medically indicated instances corticosteroids may also be used as a pain reliever and anti-inflammatory, but rarely do we use these as our long term drug choice. Also noting, NSAIDS and steroids can NOT be given together!!!!



In summary there can definitely be better living achieved through chemistry, we just have to do it safely! Never give pain meds not prescribed to your pet. Even when prescribed still approach them cautiously, especially if your pet has a history of certain pre-existing medical conditions. Do not increase the dose or frequency without consulting your veterinarian. And please always alert us if while on any of these medications you have concerns. If ever your pet is in pain, let us help you make the most informed decision for how best to alleviate their discomfort and put them at ease.



**Animal Hospital**  
**OF DUNEDIN**

**SEPTEMBER IS ANIMAL PAIN AWARENESS MONTH**

**THE most COMMON SIGNS OF PAIN IN YOUR PET**

IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE SIGNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN.

- DECREASED ACTIVITY**  
- take notice if your pet is not playing as much as usual
- NOT GOING UP OR DOWN STAIRS**  
-this could be an early sign of osteoarthritis
- RELUCTANCE TO JUMP UP ONTO SURFACES**  
-this especially applies to cats
- DIFFICULTY STANDING AFTER LYING DOWN**  
-is a sign of osteoarthritis
- DECREASED APPETITE**  
- this can signal mouth pain
- OVER GROOMING OR LICKING A PARTICULAR AREA**  
-can be a sign of referred pain

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**IVAPM**  
International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management



**Animal Hospital of Dunedin**  
 1355 Pinehurst Rd  
 Dunedin, FL 34698

**Phone:** 727-733-9351  
**Fax:** 727-733-8165  
**E-mail:**  
[animalhospitalofdunedin@gmail.com](mailto:animalhospitalofdunedin@gmail.com)



“Caring for pets with love and kindness since 1977”



We're on the Web!  
[www.ahofd.com](http://www.ahofd.com)



**Animal Hospital**  
 OF DUNEDIN  
*Caring for Pets with Love and Kindness*

**\$1**

## First Exam - New Patient

(\$49-\$80 Savings)

Includes comprehensive physical exam and one vaccine. Does not include 3yr Rabies vaccine. Must be presented at the time of purchase. Coupon may not be combined with any other offer. NL



**Animal Hospital**  
 OF DUNEDIN  
*Caring for Pets with Love and Kindness*

**-10%**

## 10% Off Dental Cleaning

( Call for an appointment today 727-733-9351)

Discount applies to anesthesia, prophylaxis, and any other dental radiographs or extractions that might be needed. Offer excludes required pre-dental labwork. May not be combined with any other coupons or discounts. Must be presented at the time of purchase. Expires 9/30/18 NL



**Animal Hospital**  
 OF DUNEDIN  
*Caring for Pets with Love and Kindness*

**Wellness Screen \$130**  
 (\$40 Savings)

Wellness Screen includes the following: Chemistry, CBC, Heartworm Test, Thyroid Level, Urinalysis, and Microalbuminuria (for cats a Leukemia and FIV test is also included). Call the office to schedule your pets visit today! May not be combined with any other offer. Coupon must be presented at the time of purchase. Expires 9/30/18 NL