



## Levittown Animal Hospital

Healing Long Island's Pets Since 1965

2703 Hempstead Tpke., Levittown, NY 11756

516-796-2266 www.LevittownVet.com

### 5 steps to conservatively manage arthritis & degenerative joint disease:

1. **Maintain proper weight.** Overweight and obese pets place much more stress on all of their joints. If you have an overweight dog, ask about our *Big Bones* fitness program for dogs.
2. **Minimize high impact activity** (running & jumping), while maximizing range-of-motion exercises (swimming & stretching).
3. **Nutritional Supplementation.** Use a daily glucosamine & chondroitin supplement, long term. Our recommended brand is **Cosequin**. There are many other similar brands available on the market, but be aware that there are no FDA or USDA regulations regarding production or quality control of these nutritional supplements. Therefore, you must find and use a reputable brand to ensure potency and consistency of the product. Cosequin is the *only* brand that has been shown safe, effective, and bioavailable in peer-reviewed, published, controlled, U.S. veterinary studies. It is also the only brand that contains the bioactive chondroitin sulfate used in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) GAIT trial.

Feeding a commercial food enriched with omega-3 fatty acids has also been effective in reducing pain and inflammation in arthritic animals. **Hill's Prescription Diet j/d** for dogs contains very high levels of omega-3 fatty acids to help reduce joint inflammation and pain. Other available foods may also be appropriate for your pet.

4. **Pharmaceuticals.** Use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) as needed –as often as every day. Our drugs of choice at this hospital are **Zubrin** (tepoxalin) and **Deramaxx** (deracoxib), but other options do exist, including Metacam (meloxicam) and Rimadyl (carprofen). There are 16,500 human deaths per year related to aspirin use. **PLEASE DO NOT USE ASPIRIN OR IBUPROFEN OR TYLENOL!**

An alternative to NSAID therapy is Adequan (polysulfated glycosaminoglycan or PSGAG). Adequan is a prescription, water-based, intramuscular injection that helps prevent the cartilage in your pet's joint from wearing away. It helps keep the cartilage healthy and intact, so that the bone in the joint cannot touch other bones. No other drug for arthritis can do that, and unlike NSAIDs, Adequan treats the underlying causes of canine arthritis, rather than just the symptoms. You should see signs of improvement within three to four weeks -sometimes sooner. After the initial loading-dose (twice a week for four weeks), most dogs will need follow-up injections monthly, but some can go up to six to eight weeks between treatments.

5. **Acupuncture** can be an excellent adjunctive treatment for arthritis. Ask to speak with Dr. Tan about potential treatment options utilizing Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine and acupuncture.

Dennis Leon, DVM

4 March 2008