

5 Prevention Strategies for Canine Osteoarthritis

Canine osteoarthritis (OA) can significantly affect a dog's mobility and quality of life, but certain approaches can help reduce the risk of this degenerative joint disease. Meghan Ramos, VMD, discusses canine OA prevention strategies that practitioners can use when working with dog owners. Scan the QR code below to watch the entire Vet2Vet conversation between Dr. Ramos and Cassi Fleming, MS, DVM, sponsored by Dechra.

1. Ensure movement is age- and endurance-appropriate

Movement that is appropriate for both the patient's age and endurance helps maintain joint health while minimizing stress on bone and cartilage. Regular exercise tailored to a dog's fitness level strengthens muscles that support joints, enhances flexibility and reduces the risk of injury or overuse that can accelerate OA development.

2. Maintain dogs at a healthy weight

Maintaining a dog at its optimal weight is essential to prevent OA. Excess weight places additional strain on joints, accelerating cartilage wear and tear. This extra pressure can lead to inflammation and joint degeneration, increasing the OA risk.

3. Screen dogs with predisposing factors

Note predisposing factors, such as breed, confirmation, an increased body condition score, and a high activity level, and routinely screen these dogs for OA. Check for joint laxity and radiographic abnormalities, particularly in the elbows, hips, and stifles.

4. Start therapeutic exercises

Recommend therapeutic exercises to help support joints through correct biomechanical movement. Ensure the dog sits and lies down with proper posture, and will stand on objects to

engage stability muscles. In addition, walk them over obstacles to work their hindlimbs.

5. Administer joint supplements

For high-risk patients, joint supplements can promote overall joint health. Look for products that contain ingredients such as omega-3 fatty acids, phycocyanin, and green lip mussels, and ensure the product is approved by the National Animal Supplement Council, which offers ingredient clarity and quality assurance.



[Scan and listen to the Vet2Vet discussion between Dr. Ramos and Dr. Cassi](#)



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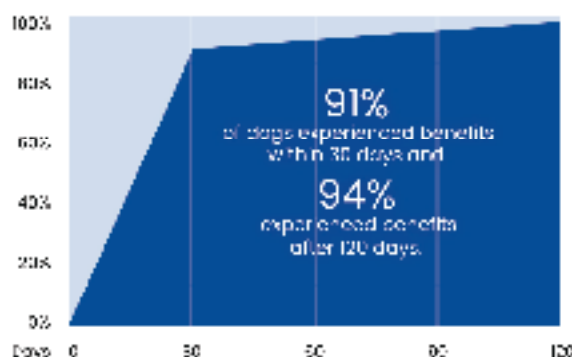
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*Data available upon request

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