

Degenrative Joint Disease

The Spiral of Degeneration

Digenenerative Joint Disease (*DJD*) can seriously threaten your pet's vitality and quality of life. Trauma, stress and even everyday activity can cause damage to the tissues that enclose the joint, the delicate synovial membrane and the fibrous joint capsule. When this tissue is damaged, white blood cells from nereby vessels begin to invade the joint space. These invading white blood cells release destructive enzymes and free radicals that can deteriorate the joint cartilage.

Weakened by enzymatic damage, the debilitated synovial fluid becomes a thin, watery liquid with poor lubricating properties and an impaired ability to nourish the cartilage. Articular cartilage is particularly vulnerable, as it must rely on the weakened synovial fluid for its sole source of nourishment. This spiral of degeneration in articular cartilage exposes the bone to friction during movement, causing inflammation, pain and decreased mobility. This contributes to decreased activity and muscle atrophy, further exacerbating the problem.

Warning Sighns of DJD

Additional factors such as obesity, intense activity or injury cause further trauma to delicate joints. You should consult your veterinarian if your pet presents one or more of these symptoms:

- Change in gait or pace
- Stiffness or difficulty getting up
- Reduced activity or lethargy
- Decreased flexibility
- Difficulty performing normal activities
- Muscle atrophy
- Joint pain or inflammation

Your Pet's Active Lifestyle

Physical activity is essential for the health of pets. For dogs and cats to remain healthy as they age, they should be active and full of life. Healthy joints are a critical factor in allowing your pet to run, jump or walk with ease.

The joint is a biomechanical marvel. The joint capsule absorbs the shock of impact as your pet is in motion, while cartilage prevents the ends of the bones from damaging each other during movement. The joint capsule also contains a nutrient-rich liquid called synovial fluid to transport the vital nutrients needed by cartilage and other connective tissues.