

# Is My Pet in Pain?



## How do I know if my pet is in pain?

Pain in pets can be attributed to many things. Dental disease, injuries and age-related diseases such as arthritis are examples of conditions that can cause pain. Because pets cannot verbally communicate their feelings, it is vital to pay close attention to changes in their behavior. Cats especially will often hide any discomfort by literally hiding. Your pet may act differently when in pain, become less active than usual, change eating or grooming patterns, or have obvious physical signs such as limping or gnawing/licking at one particular spot. Your pet may also show discomfort by becoming more vocal or being protective of certain areas of the body. Your pet may be unable to jump, or climb stairs like in the past. Changes such as these could be due to pain.

## How can I prevent pain in my pet?

Preventive care and close attention to your pet's physical state can help you ensure your pet isn't experiencing pain. An excellent time to closely examine your pet is while petting or grooming. Being able to recognize what's normal with your pet is as important as recognizing what's abnormal. Be sure to check areas such as your pet's paws and stomach area for injuries, swelling or heat. All of these could be signs of pain in your pet. Diet, exercise and regular exams are key to the health of your pet. Pain associated with injuries, surgery or age-related conditions such as arthritis can often be alleviated by your Banfield doctor with different medications and supplements.

## What type of pain can pets feel?

Pets feel pain just like people feel pain and have quite variable responses to pain. Some have a very high tolerance while others do not. This is why each pet should be individually evaluated and treated for pain.

Mild pain can come from early or mild dental disease or skin irritation. Moderate pain can be from a broken or abscessed tooth, minor eye injury, ear infections or the repair of a knee injury. Lastly, severe pain can come from broken bones, severe burns or even moderate eye injuries.

## What is the treatment for pain?

Your doctor may recommend several diagnostic tests ranging from special exams and bloodwork, to X-rays or ultrasound to pinpoint the pain your pet is experiencing. Along with lifestyle changes, and perhaps diet recommendations, your doctor may recommend pain medications or supplements. Pain relief medications come in many forms from injections to tablets. For chronic pain such as arthritis, the goal is to maintain long term pain relief. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) provide pain relief with few side effects. Corticosteroids are also often used to help control pain in pets. **Never give your pet aspirin or Tylenol®, or any human pain reliever without first discussing this with your Banfield doctor.** Pets metabolize medications differently than people, and common headache/joint relievers for people can poison pets sometimes with just one dose. One maximum strength Tylenol can kill a cat.

## Why should I treat pain in my pet?

Our pets deserve to be as pain free as possible. At Banfield, we are committed to strengthening the pet-human bond. Pets in pain can develop unwanted and potentially dangerous behaviors that damage this bond. Pets eat and sleep better when they are comfortable, which can speed their recovery from injury or surgery and may also prevent weakening of the immune system. Your Banfield doctor has the ability to prevent suffering for your pet and can maximize your pet's life to the fullest. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Banfield hospital.

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For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

