

How to Tell if Your Dog is in Pain

Courtesy of the AAHA – American Animal Hospital Association

Dogs feel pain for many of the same reasons as human - infections, dental problems, arthritis, bone disease and cancer. They also feel discomfort following surgical procedures. You are the best person to look for the subtle changes in behavior that may indicate your pet is suffering. It is important to stay alert to these signs, because the sooner your dog's pain is diagnosed and treated, the sooner he or she can heal and resume a normal happy life. If your dog shows one or more of these behaviors and you suspect it may be due to pain, notify your veterinarian immediately.



VOCALIZING:

- Whining
- Howling
- Whimpering
- Yelping
- Groaning
- Grunting

DAILY HABITS:

- Decreased appetite
- Withdraws from social interaction
- Changes in sleeping or drinking
- Lapses in housetraining
- Sleeps more

SELF-MUTILATION:

- Licking
- Biting
- Scratching a particular part of its body

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

- Restless
- Reluctant to move
- Difficulty getting up from a laying position
- Repetitively gets up and lies down
- Trembling, circling or lying very still
- Seeks more affection than usual

FACIAL EXPRESSION:

- Grimaces, vacant stare
- Glazed, wide-eyed or looks sleepy
- Enlarged pupils
- Flattened ears
- Pants excessively when at rest

GROOMING:

- Coat lacks normal shine
- Hair stands up in places

SELF-PROTECTION:

- Protects a body part
- Doesn't put weight on a limb
- Limp
- Doesn't want to be held or picked up
- Hides

AGGRESSIVE:

especially a previously friendly dog

- Acts out of character
- Growls, hisses, bites
- Pins ears back
- A normally aggressive dog may act quiet, docile

POSTURE:

- Hunched with hindquarters raised and front end down on the ground
- Lays on its side

Don't Treat Your Dog's Pain by Yourself!

Never administer pain medication to a pet without consulting with your veterinarian. After diagnosing the problem, your veterinarian will explain the benefits, risks and costs associated with various treatment options. That way, you and your veterinarian can choose the approach that best meets the needs of you and your dog. If your veterinarian prescribes a pain medication:

DO

- Follow your veterinarian's instructions.
- Watch for possible side effects, including vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stools (appears black or tarry), change in drinking or urination, change in behavior such as depression, restlessness or appetite loss, yellowing of gums, skin or whites of eyes
- STOP medicating immediately if your dog shows any of these symptoms and you're your vet at once!
- Keep the drug safely out of reach of your pets and children.

DON'T

- Change the dosage or frequency unless directed by your veterinarian.
- Give any other drug to your dog while it is taking the pain medication (without first talking to your veterinarian).
- Hesitate to call your veterinarian if you ever have questions or concerns.

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Info, courtesy of TLC
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