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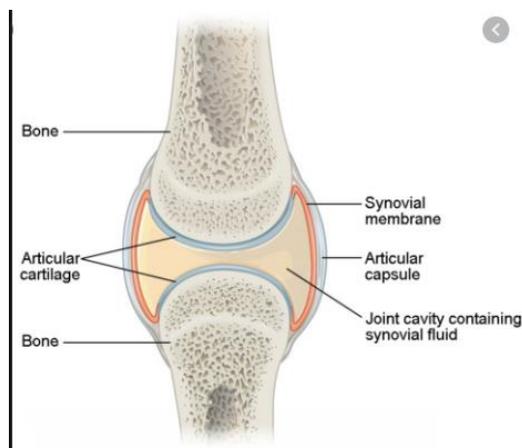
ARTHRITIS = Pain, inflammation, and loss of function in a joint.

ARTHRITIS can begin at any age, but once begun there is an ongoing cycle of degeneration (“**arthrosis**”).

Today, **chondroprotective therapy** is at last able to interrupt that cycle. If started early, and maintained, this therapy may even rejuvenate the joint, especially its cartilage [which covers all bone within a joint, providing a protective interface].

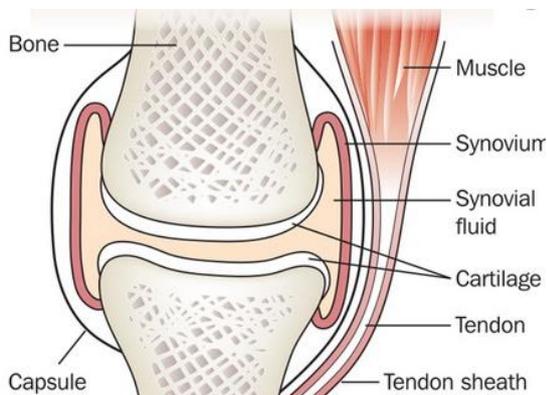
Joint cartilage, is nourished and protected by joint fluid [synovium] which is produced by, & contained within the joint capsule. These can also be assisted by a rational combination of therapies

Ligaments restrain the joint’s movement. If they are stretched or torn the joint becomes loose & moves incorrectly, causing extreme wear and tear ... some ligaments exist as strips of tissue within the joint [for example, the anterior cruciate ligament in the stifle, or knee joint], others are effectively thickenings of the joint capsule



All these structures are assisted by structured chondroprotection. However this therapy helps the body to help itself’ so whilst the outcome is positive, it may also seem slow.

Outside the joint: Muscle tone is important; spasm or weakness in muscles can stiffen or mal-align a joint. Tendons join muscle to bone and can play a major role in ensuring correct joint motion: especially the giant Patella and Achilles tendons.



Bony “spurs” which are actually more akin to mountain ranges! Start as an attempt by the bone to strengthen and support a weakened joint. However when they “scrape” they cause severe pain and disability: sometimes removable by surgery, but more often the pain is controlled so the pet can pursue a normal life.

“Spurs” are a complicated issue, best discussed separately and specifically during your arthritis assessment.

Triggers of arthritis include:

1. Genetics: Inherent instability or bad alignment as with slipping knee-caps & hip dysplasia. or, at a microscopic level, the joint cells themselves may be genetically predisposed to early “aging”.
2. Injury: Dislocations, & broken bones that fracture into the joint are obvious recipes for disaster. But other injuries may go un-noticed at the time, especially in young playful pets. Many suffer falls, are run over, or trodden on etc and ‘scraped cartilage’ may trigger arthritis later in life. Today we hope that sound chondroprotective treatment of the pups/kittens at the time of their accidents may off-set this later development
3. Excessive concussion: especially in large-breed pups that play heavily on undeveloped joints, and for any dog overworked when young..
4. Malnutrition, especially during growth, but also imbalances and deficiencies of micronutrients such as certain essential fatty acids throughout life.
5. “Wear and Tear” and “Ageing” whereby the cells of cartilage become less active, & are slower to repair. Chondroprotectants do help them!
6. Infection: this may be blood borne, such as “joint-ill” in newborns, or may follow a penetrating injury

SIGNS of Arthritis can vary:-

for CATS, ... watch their movement. They may move around less, move stiffly, move slowly, move carefully. Their claws get caught in the carpet; they climb and jump less often and clumsily; they over-groom tender parts, under-groom bits that are now hard to reach, such as along their spine.

for DOGS, ... watch their behaviour. They may be reluctant to climb steps or have difficulty in rising, especially in the morning. Some limp. Some lag behind on walks. Some become aggressive and may snap or yelp if touched. Others obsessively lick their paws, even when the pain may be elsewhere.

Simple things that may help:

- * A warm, supportive bed
- * A coat to keep their back warm [YES even for cats!]
- * Avoid dampness, chills & draughts.
- * Gentle but regular exercise, preferably on flat ground. Swimming is great, but don’t let them chill
- * Shed those excess kilos.

Arthritis Therapy: Diet, Surgery, Physiotherapy, &/or Anti-inflammatory therapy is programmed to match the specific case

1. **NSAIDS** = Non-steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Therapy, S4 prescription therapy. These are non-cortisone anti-inflammatory analgaesics. They give rapid relief by reduce inflammation and muscle spasm, & easing pain. By allowing normal joint usage, they improve muscle tone and joint alignment. Increased activity means better circulation, a stronger heart.

NSAIDS usage does need to be tailored to suit each case. They are available only after a veterinary assessment & on a vet's recommendation. Modern veterinary NSAIDS are potent & prepared especially to suit dogs, cats, horses & other species. They rarely cause the side effects reported for older, less safe products. Used correctly, some interact with SLACAS & Neutraceuticals to really improve joint integrity

2. **Chondroprotection** boosts the natural repair mechanisms & can reverse many of the changes that occur with osteoarthritis or joint injury. Chondroprotectants target & activate the cells within joints that build & repair joint structure. They help restore strength & smoothness to damaged ligaments & cartilage, re-invigorate the adjacent bone and improve the consistency and volume of joint fluid, replacing the "cushion" that every joint needs. Used early, they may block arthritis triggers.

Usually given by injection for 4 weeks, then single follow-up treatments are tailored to suit each case. Improvement is probably felt by pets within days, and becomes obvious to their owners after 3 – 4 weeks. There is less pain, inflammation, stiffness, lameness, less need for NSAIDs or other therapy.

3. The cells thus invigorated are "fed" by **neutraceuticals**. Chondroaminoglycoides such as Chondroitin & Glucosamine are found naturally in healthy joints, but their levels fall in diseased ones. Replacement facilitates repair. This is the body repairing itself, so again improvement may be slow, over a period of weeks to months. Used early, in combination with rational physiotherapy and rest, they may ameliorate conditions such as hip dysplasia or osteochondrosis. Later they will help restore vitality to disabled joints.

These are an "over-the-counter" product, BUT be careful, there are lots available and MANY do not meet the apparent claims made on their label. Some ingredients such as chondroitin may be inactivated by heat during manufacture, or by interaction with other ingredients in the product. They may not be suited to the species ... people & dogs DO have different requirements ... or be of uncertain potency.

We recommend and stock 4-CYTE an excellent neutraceutical which in recent and well documented trials has been shown to actually encourage replication of the joint chondrocytes: so there are more joint cells to do the work!

Some Mature & Senior foods include nutraceuticals in their formulation.

4. **SURGERY** can sometimes cure: as when a damaged ligament can be strengthened, or a joint realigned (especially for knees, hips and vertebrae). Sometimes “spurs” can be removed. Sometimes a joint is surgically “ankylosed” to minimise painful movement. Complete joint replacement surgery for knees, hips and elbows is available for both dogs and cats.

5. **PHYSIOTHERAPY.** A suitable regime can be discussed for each patient. Acute cases will require REST and a graded return to exercise.

6. **OTHER Non-Prescription products:**

Omega 3 Fatty Acids are joint cleansers that reduce painful inflammation, and also improve skin tone and furcoat lustre. They are available as supplements, are included in some Senior foods, and the remarkable **JD foods** for both dogs and cats

Free Radical Scavengers, help remove harmful debris and by-products from damaged joints

Non-specific healants such as DOMOSO, Rapigel.

7. **Herbal, Homeopathic and Traditional Therapies.** We suggest advice be sought from the Sandy Bay Holistic Veterinary Centre.