

Prevent Osteoarthritis In Labrador Retrievers

Large breeds just like Labrador Retrievers are more likely to suffer problems related to bones and joint that makes movement difficult and painful. We are aware that Labrador Retrievers are active and energetic dogs but if you notice that your pet is no longer the usual active and energetic dog he used to be, then something is wrong with him. The culprit could be osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis usually affects dogs in their middle and senior years but puppies can also be affected. It is a chronic, degenerative joint disease caused by progressive inflammation and deterioration of the cartilage, bone and soft tissue of one or more joints. Canine osteoarthritis happens when the cartilage that lines the bones in a joint breaks down losing its cushion. This cartilage break down causes friction between the bones, results to stiffness, loss of mobility and various degrees of inflammation and pain.

Canine osteoarthritis is a result of unstable joints because of slack ligaments. Congenital joint disorders such as hip dysplasia, osteochondritis (OCD) and elbow dysplasia. That is why it is always important to treat these diseases at once to prevent it from developing into canine osteoarthritis. It can also be a result of trauma either from direct or indirect injury and from faulty bone and cartilage development. Obesity will also result to osteoarthritis because of the excessive weight carried by the joints. Age and metabolic diseases may as well cause this disease. Joints commonly affected are the hips, elbows, lower back, knees and wrists.

There are signs to watch out for the presence of canine osteoarthritis. These signs include stiffness, lameness, pain and lethargy. An affected dog may also exhibit decreased activity, difficulty rising and cracking sounds during joint movement. Your vet will diagnose osteoarthritis based on your dog's age, medical history and physical exam. X-rays of the joints may as well be needed to determine how severe the condition is.

There are many ways to treat this disease and measures to prevent it. Anti-inflammatory drugs are prescribed however, this should only be used for short-term pain relief because of its wide range of side effects. In severe cases, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin, carprofen and meloxicam are commonly used to increase joint mobility and control pain. Weight control is also important especially in obese dogs. The dog's regular exercise as well as other physical activity should be gentle to help trim weight and improve strength and mobility of the joint.

Remember, a dog with canine osteoarthritis should not be included in the breeding process to prevent the spread of this disease.

About the Author

Richard Cussons is a writer with tons of [knowledge on Labrador Retrievers](#). Discover effective [tips on training Labradors at labradorsavvy.com](#).

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