

Signs of Pain in Dogs

Recognising pain in your dog is crucial for ensuring their well-being and quality of life. Here's a detailed guide to help you identify the signs of pain and take appropriate action.



Recognising Signs of Pain

1. Changes in Behaviour

- **Play and Activity Level:** A noticeable decrease in interest in play or outdoor activities.
- **Energy Levels:** Signs of depression, such as listlessness, hiding, or a lack of appetite.
- **Touch Sensitivity:** Reluctance to be touched or handled, which may indicate discomfort.
- **Toileting Issues:** Toileting indoors (if previously trained) or having difficulty doing so.
- **Excessive Licking:** Licking a specific area where they may feel pain.
- **Irritability:** Increased irritability, growling, or snapping at people or other pets.

- **Vocalisation:** Whimpering or howling, which may indicate distress.



2. Physical Signs

- **Mobility Issues:** Limping or a slower pace than usual; refusal to walk.
- **Resting Difficulties:** Reluctance to lie down or difficulty getting up.
- **Jumping Challenges:** Difficulty jumping onto furniture or using stairs.
- **Eating Problems:** Difficulty eating or showing reluctance to eat.

Types of Pain in Dogs

- **Acute Pain:** Sudden and short-term pain, often resulting from injuries or illnesses, typically improving within a few days.
- **Chronic Pain:** Ongoing pain that can interfere with daily activities, often related to conditions like arthritis or dental issues. Older dogs are more susceptible to chronic pain.



What to Do If You Suspect Pain

1. **Contact Your Vet:** If you observe any signs of pain, reach out to your veterinarian immediately. They will ask about your observations and may perform assessments to determine the cause.
2. **Assessments and Tests:** Your vet may perform various tests, including X-rays, to diagnose the issue. They may prescribe pain relief or anti-inflammatory medications based on their findings.

Managing Your Dog's Pain

Your vet will provide tailored advice, which may include:

- **Weight Management:** Keeping your dog at a healthy weight is essential, especially for dogs with arthritis, as excess weight can exacerbate pain.
- **Accessible Food and Water:** Place bowls in easy-to-reach locations to encourage hydration and nutrition.
- **Comfortable Resting Areas:** Provide soft, cushioned beds for your dog to rest comfortably.
- **Assistive Devices:** Consider ramps or steps to help your dog get onto furniture or into the car.
- **Prevent Slips:** Cover slippery surfaces in your home with rugs or mats to prevent falls.



Important Note

Pain in dogs can change or worsen over time. If your dog's condition deteriorates or their medication no longer seems effective, consult your vet. In cases where your dog's quality of life is severely impacted, it may be necessary to consider more serious options, including euthanasia.

By being vigilant and responsive to your dog's needs, you can help them lead a comfortable and happy life.