

# Is My Pet In Pain? A Client Handout

Humans have enjoyed the companionship of their four-footed friends for centuries. Part of Banfield, The Pet Hospital's® vision is to educate Pet parents on how better Pet care will maximize the life of their Pet as well as their own. This handout is intended to educate Pet parents on pain their Pets might be experiencing, as well as to introduce you to some of the signs and treatments associated with Pets in pain. Pets are members of the family and it is Banfield's pleasure and honor to treat your family member.

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

Just as with people, 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. In the wild, animals hide pain as it could draw the attention of predators. Although domesticated, Pets do maintain some of their wild instincts. Cats especially will often hide any discomfort by literally hiding. If your Pet is in pain, she may act differently, become less active than usual, change eating or grooming patterns, or have obvious physical signs such as limping or knawing/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 she used to. 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. Brushing your Pet is an excellent time to closely examine your Pet. 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 could be signs of pain in your Pet. Your Banfield doctor can ensure that your Pet is in the best shape and is being fed an appropriate diet for the life stage she's in. Just as with people, 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?

The range of pain that your Pet can feel begins at "no pain" and runs all the way to "severe." 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 torn cruciate (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, bloodwork, radiographs 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 with injections offering the fastest relief. For chronic pain such as arthritis, the goal is to maintain pain relief through the use of medication, diet changes and supplements. 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. Just two maximum strength Tylenols can kill a cat.

## Why should I treat pain in my Pet?

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.



Amber and Chester

