VetterCare
Expert Pet Care. At Home.



A FREE KIT FOR DOGS LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

Comfort, one week at a time.

Arthritis is long-term, and your vet's plan is what keeps your dog comfortable. This kit puts that plan on paper, helps you notice changes early, and makes it easy to hand off your dog's care with confidence, whoever is giving it.

General information to use with your veterinarian. Not medical advice.

1. Weekly comfort and mobility notes
2. Home setup checklist
3. Medication schedule
4. Signs to call your vet
5. Care handoff sheet
6. Questions for your vet

STEP 1 · ONE LINE PER WEEK

Weekly comfort and mobility notes

Arthritis changes slowly, so small changes are easy to miss. Compare your dog with how they used to move and act, and bring this sheet to every recheck. It's a record for you and your vet, not a guide to changing treatment. AAHA

Week of	Getting up easy / slow / hard	Walks how far or how long	Stairs, jumping, car OK / avoids	Limping which leg; always / comes and goes	Rest settled / restless	Mood and play usual / less	Meds given as prescribed all / missed	Notes, video taken?

Signs to note: slow or stiff getting up, trouble sitting down, walking shorter distances, avoiding stairs, jumping or the car, a limp that's there all the time or comes and goes, sleeping more and playing less. A short phone video of your dog walking helps your vet see what you see. (ACVS; AVMA; AAHA; Texas A&M; Cornell) Print as many copies as you need.

STEP 2 · SMALL CHANGES, MORE COMFORT

Home setup checklist

Simple changes at home can help a dog with arthritis feel more comfortable. Tick each one off as you go. AVMA

Floors

- [ ] Rugs or carpet runners on slippery floors, for secure footing. AAHA

Getting up high

- [ ] Ramps or pet stairs to places your dog can no longer reach easily, such as the bed, couch or car. AAHA; AVMA

Rest

- [ ] A sleeping area that avoids stairs. AVMA
- [ ] An orthopedic pet bed. AVMA
- [ ] A quiet, protected spot to rest. A baby gate can keep it calm. AAHA
- [ ] Resting spots a manageable distance from food and water. AAHA

Meals

- [ ] Raised food and water bowls (a raised feeding platform). AVMA
- [ ] Food measured to the amount your vet recommends, to keep your dog slim. ACVS; Texas A&M

Outside

- [ ] Easy access to the yard to urinate and defecate. AAHA
- [ ] Leash walks and low-impact exercise; less running and jumping. ACVS

MY VET'S INSTRUCTIONS

Walks: how far _____ **How often** _____

Avoid _____ **Ideal weight** _____

Rehab or home exercises _____

Never give human pain medicine, such as ibuprofen or aspirin. It can seriously harm the stomach, kidneys and liver. Talk to your vet before giving any medicine your vet didn't prescribe. Texas A&M; FDA

STEP 3 · FILL THIS IN WITH YOUR VET

Medication schedule

Write each medicine exactly as your vet prescribed it. Don't change a dose without talking to your vet first. FDA

Medication (name on the label)	Amount, as prescribed	Times	With food?	Prescribed for

THIS WEEK: INITIAL EACH DOSE WHEN IT'S GIVEN

Medication	Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

ASK YOUR VET

Blood tests for liver and kidneys: next on _____ **Then every** _____

Next recheck _____ **Refill due** _____

Keep the Client Information Sheet that comes with each pain medicine prescription and refill. Tell your vet about every other medicine your dog takes, including over-the-counter ones. FDA

STEP 4 · KEEP THIS ON THE FRIDGE

Signs to call your vet

CALL YOUR VET RIGHT AWAY IF YOUR DOG

- Has severe or sudden pain or limping
- Has pain or limping that's getting worse
- Has been limping for more than a day or two

Pain medicine side effects: the FDA advises owners to stop giving the medication and call the vet if they see

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bloody or black stool
- Eating less
- Less active
- Yellow gums or yellow whites of the eyes

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

CALL SOON AND MENTION IT AT YOUR NEXT VISIT

- Any negative change in how your dog moves
- Less interest in walks or play
- Slow or stiff getting up
- Trouble sitting down
- Avoids stairs, jumping or the car
- Sleeping more
- Doesn't want to be touched
- Snaps at people or other pets

These signs can have other causes too, and each is a good reason for a vet visit. Never give human pain medicine. (Texas A&M; AVMA)

If your dog is experiencing an emergency, please contact your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital right away.

Our vet _____ Phone _____

Emergency hospital _____ Phone _____

STEP 5 · FOR ANYONE CARING FOR YOUR DOG

Care handoff sheet

Dog's name _____ Weight _____ Age _____

Joints affected _____

Our vet _____ Phone _____

Emergency hospital _____ Phone _____

My phone while I'm away _____

WALKS AND THE COMFORT ROUTINE

Walks: times a day _____ How long each _____

Stairs ☐ ramp ☐ carry ☐ blocked ☐ OK Car ☐ ramp ☐ lift

Sleeps in _____ Allowed on furniture? ☐ yes, with ramp ☐ no

Rehab or home exercises _____

Medication (name on the label)	Amount, as prescribed	Times	Given with food?

FOOD AND WHAT'S NORMAL FOR MY DOG

Food + amount _____ Times _____

A normal day looks like _____

ASK YOUR VET, AND WRITE THEIR ANSWER HERE

If a pain medicine dose is missed or late, what should happen?

_____

If my dog limps more or won't walk, who should my caregiver call first?

_____

STEP 6 · BRING THIS TO YOUR NEXT VISIT

Questions for your vet

1. Which joints are affected, and how advanced is the arthritis?
2. What is the pain plan, and which side effects should I watch for?
3. Does my dog need blood tests before or during long-term pain medication?
4. How far and how often should we walk? Which activities should we avoid?
5. What is my dog's ideal weight, and how much should I feed?
6. Would a therapeutic diet or omega-3 fatty acids help my dog?
7. Would rehab help? Can you refer us?
8. Which changes at home would help most?
9. How often should we come back for rechecks?

Sources. American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS), "Osteoarthritis in Dogs" · Merck Veterinary Manual, "Osteoarthritis (Degenerative Joint Disease)" · American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), "2022 AAHA Pain Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats" · American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), "Caring for senior cats and dogs" · U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), "Get the Facts about Pain Relievers for Pets" · Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Pet Talk: "Arthritis in Dogs" and "Arthritis and Your Pet" · Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Riney Canine Health Center, "What to expect when taking your limping dog to the veterinarian."



NEED TO TRAVEL?

A veterinary professional can keep the comfort routine going.

Arthritis care doesn't take a break when you do. A VetterCare veterinary professional can follow your veterinarian's written instructions at home: giving daily medication as prescribed, keeping your dog's comfort routine, and walking your dog the way your vet allows. Your dog stays home, with their own bed, rugs and ramps. You get photo updates while you're away, and you meet your veterinary professional in person before you leave.

vettercare.com

(844) 697-3871

In-home care across Greater Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott and Dallas–Fort Worth.

VetterCare gathers this information from published veterinary sources. It is general information, not veterinary advice, and doesn't replace an exam by your veterinarian. VetterCare veterinary professionals follow your veterinarian's instructions. If your pet is experiencing an emergency, contact your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital right away.

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