



Signs of Pain in Dogs

Animals have the same pain sensors humans have, but they express their pain differently.

- *If an action hurts, they just avoid doing it (clever creatures).* If they can't avoid pain, then more subtle signs are expressed. Because dogs can't communicate their pain verbally, they often manifest the physical signs of pain differently than humans. We need to learn their body language of pain.
- *Our pets generally will not whine, moan, or cry out with pain.* Even with a broken limb, many cats and dogs may hop along on three legs and not make a peep.
- *Many of the signs of pain are also signs of anxiety.* In fact, pain is thought to cause a level of anxiety in animals, which makes sense!
- *The site of pain may determine the behaviors, but not always.* For example, dental pain is often missed, as pets generally only refuse to eat or paw at their mouths if they are in extreme pain with teeth falling out on their own. As humans, we would certainly be seeking dental help long before that ever happened!

- *It is not okay for our pets to be in pain.* Veterinary medicine and allied professionals have advanced a long way, and we have more and more tools to treat both acute and chronically painful pets. So if you are concerned that your cat is painful, please have s/he checked out. We will work with you to find the right solution for your furry family member.

Do you understand the Canine Pain language? *Look for these signs:*

- Loss of function: trouble with stairs or getting into the car, slow to rise after resting, or no longer doing things s/he used to do
- Limping on or complete refusal to walk on a limb— your dog would walk normally if his or her limb felt fine!
- Panting
- Increased or decreased social interaction with family or other pets
- Loss of appetite
- Not moving much or refusing to move
- Constantly moving—pacing, trying to find comfortable resting position
- Chewing, licking, or staring at painful areas
- Guarding of painful areas, or growling/nipping when touched

Pets And Their People

Fulham Gardens Veterinary Surgery - 441 Tapley's Hill Rd, Fulham Gardens 5024 – ph:8355 5475
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 Unley Veterinary Surgery - 36 Unley Rd, Unley 5061 – ph: 8272 3400

- Change in facial expression
 - Bulging, wide, or glazed eyes
 - Fixed glare or over-focused
- Change in posture
 - Drooping head or ears
 - Low tail carriage
- Frequent 'downward dog' stretches or wide-based stance
- Weight shifting from painful limbs
- Changes in toileting: accidents in unusual places, loss of continence

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