

Feline arthritis is no different than human arthritis and is quite common. It's caused when joint cartilage becomes damaged or deteriorates. When this happens, the remaining bones lose their "cushion" and rub together resulting in arthritis.

Arthritis is most common in cats that:

- Are middle-age or geriatric
- Are overweight or obese
- Have had past joint injuries
- Have congenital abnormalities (occurring at birth)

Arthritis is more common in overweight and obese cats. See [Nutrition and Weight Control](#) for your cat.

Arthritis is painful to your cat

While arthritis often starts gradually and its signs can be difficult to detect, symptoms of pain in your cat are fairly easy to spot. First, it's important to know the behaviors that are normal for your cat; each cat is different. Then watch for any changes that might include:

- Reduced activity level / more time sleeping
- Anxiousness and restlessness
- Difficulty getting comfortable to rest or sleep.
- Irritable/avoids contact with family members
- Cries out in pain or squirms when handled
- Not grooming resulting in an unkempt coat
- Decreased appetite and weight loss
- Lameness (may be difficult to detect)
- Difficulty getting in or out of the litter box
- Possible urination/defecation outside the litter box



Arthritis is common in cats that are overweight and middle age.

Treatment for cats with arthritis begins with a diagnosis

If you notice any of the above symptoms, make an appointment with your veterinarian immediately. You'll want to rule out any other health conditions. Your veterinarian will conduct a physical examination of your cat and will probably take x-rays. Your veterinarian may also want to evaluate your cat's joint fluid to rule out joint infections. The pain associated with arthritis is highly treatable. If your cat is diagnosed with arthritis, your veterinarian will suggest a number of treatment options to keep your cat comfortable and pain-free. Your veterinarian will also suggest steps you can take to help make your kitty more comfortable in your home, such as:

- Adding a ramp or steps to help kitty access sleeping and perching areas.
- Getting a heated cat bed or heating pad to warm kitty's achy joints.
- Gently massaging the affected areas if kitty will let you.
- Keeping kitty active with regular exercise.
- Watching excess weight.