

The path from “playful pup” to “couch potato” may have started years ago

Dogs love to lounge. (Admit it, even if your couch is a dog-free zone, you can't resist the occasional sofa snuggle.) But if your dog has become a permanent fixture on the cushions, she could be sitting on a health secret – one she may have been hiding since she was a pup.

Puppies are known for boundless energy

They run and jump and play, then do it all over again.

ENERGY LEVEL



DOG'S AGE



Puppies also put a lot of energy into developing healthy bones and joints.



Too much play or early OA?

As dogs age, they may naturally become less playful. Still, young dogs should have plenty of stamina. So needing to rest in the middle of a fetch session could be an early sign of canine osteoarthritis (OA).



Canine OA (also known as arthritis) is a painful disease that develops when joint cartilage, tissues and fluids break down. As OA gets worse over time, it can cause bone-on-bone contact and an uncomfortable life for your dog.

Watch for early warning signs of canine OA



- Struggling to get comfortable
- Frequently changing positions
- Shifting weight side to side or front to back when standing
- Acting more anxious
- Hesitating to jump on the couch or into the car
- Showing less interest in going on walks or playing

Your dog's risk of OA

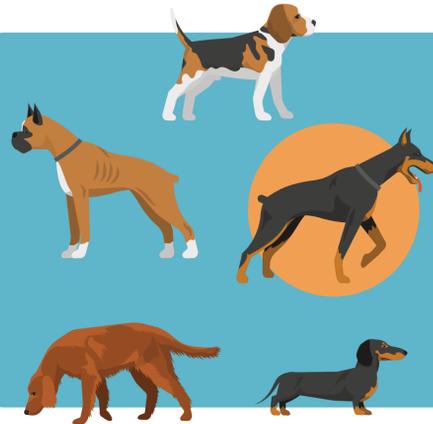
Any age and size of dog can develop OA, but large-breed dogs including golden retrievers, Labrador retrievers and German shepherds are more at risk.



Arthritis usually starts at 4 to 6 months old



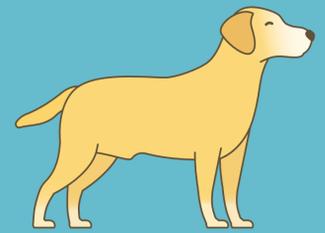
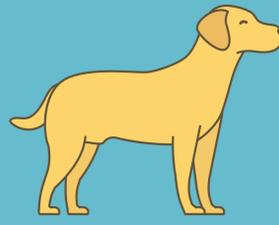
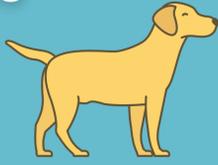
While arthritis in people often comes with age, many cases of canine OA are genetic and often begin because of a developmental orthopedic condition.



1 in 5

dogs suffer from canine OA

OA by the ages



Growing puppies & young dogs may show occasional signs of OA that last just seconds. Starting veterinary management at this age is ideal to help **keep cartilage healthy**.

Young adult dogs can experience signs that are more frequent and last longer. **Veterinary treatment is critical at this age** to help slow OA so it's not debilitating later in life.

Adult dogs with OA may have difficulty exercising or performing regular activities. OA becomes more **difficult to manage because of worn cartilage**, but veterinarians can still give dogs some relief.

Senior dogs may show the most advanced signs of OA. **If OA wasn't managed earlier in life**, they may find moving – including getting on or off the couch – to be very difficult or impossible.

Good news: Slowing the effects of OA is possible

Veterinarians can manage OA effectively, especially if it's diagnosed early. With early treatment, you could slow the effects of OA and help keep your dog moving.



Talk to your veterinarian about OA, no matter your dog's age. If your veterinarian diagnoses OA, ask about ways to help slow the progression of OA for your dog.

After all, your dog should sit on the couch for cuddles, not OA.

