

Lameness in Dogs

What is lameness?

Lameness refers to an inability to properly use one or more limbs. It is most often associated with pain or injury. The most common causes of acute or sudden lameness in dogs are injury to a joint, bone fracture or dislocation. Osteoarthritis and hip dysplasia may also cause lameness in dogs. Lameness can affect dogs of any age from growing puppies to senior dogs.

- Puppies - lameness may be caused by growth abnormalities or by injury
- Adult Dogs - limb injuries sometimes occur without any history of an accident or trauma
- Senior Dogs - Degenerative joint disease (DJD) or arthritis are the most common causes of lameness

My dog suddenly developed lameness and there is no obvious cause on examinations or x-ray. What can be done?

Lameness of unknown origin is common in dogs of all types and sizes. If only they could talk! Depending on the severity and duration, additional tests such as blood and urine tests to look for an infectious cause may be required. In some cases, a trial with anti-inflammatory medications may be necessary. Your veterinarian will determine the best course of action based on your pet's condition and the results of diagnostic tests.

If my dog continues to be lame, will he be on medication forever?

Not necessarily. Most of the time, we are able to accurately diagnose the cause of lameness and provide your pet with specific treatment. Some forms of lameness such as osteoarthritis require lifelong medical treatment while others require surgical repair.

