

HERVEY BAY VETERINARY SURGERY

Owner Information Series

LAMENESS IN DOGS

Lameness refers to the disability of one or more limbs. It is most often associated with pain or injury resulting in a pet holding the injured limb up or avoiding using it.



WHAT CAUSES LAMENESS?

Lameness can come from various parts of the anatomy of the legs, such as joints, bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments, but can also be referred pain from the nerves of the neck and back.

Lameness is generally an indicator of pain however it can be also an indicator of nerve defects and conformation caused gait issues. Lameness can have many causes including:-

- injuries (fractures, dislocations)
- cuts and wounds
- foreign bodies (e.g. grass seed in between paws)
- insect bites and stings
- arthritis
- cruciate ligament rupture
- patella luxation
- hip and elbow dysplasia
- snakebites
- allergies
- neurological (nerve) and muscular problems
- immune mediated disease
- cancer
- mineral imbalances
- hormonal and other systemic diseases

SO HOW DO WE FIGURE OUT WHAT IS WRONG?

Diagnosis of lameness is greatly aided by the **history you can give us** on your pet's problem such as duration, which legs are involved and any inciting incidents.

Depending on your pet's signs your pet **MAY**:-

- only require a physical examination
- require x-rays (radiographs)
- require some blood tests and other pathology tests
- need a neurological examination

TREATMENT FOR LAMENESS

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Treatment depends on the cause of the lameness and will be tailored to the individual patient. Our aim with any treatment is to use a multi-modal approach, which means using a combination of treatment methods so we can minimise the use of medication and associated side effects.

Treatment may involve one or several of the following:-

- emergency treatment
- wound care
- surgery
- medication
- nutraceuticals
- weight loss and dietary modifications
- exercises and an exercise regime

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PET IS LIMPING OR BECOMES LAME?

If your pet is showing signs of lameness; is limping or it appears painful for your pet to put weight on their leg/foot, please contact us. We will ask several questions about your pet and advise a course of action which may involve a check-up with our veterinarian.