

Is Your Dog in Pain?

Their Behavior May Tell

Dogs feel pain for many of the same reasons as humans: arthritis, bone disease, cancer, dental problems, and infections. They also feel discomfort following surgical procedures. Unfortunately, unlike humans, dogs are unable to speak to us about when and where they hurt.

You are best positioned to look for the subtle changes in behavior that may indicate your dog is in pain. By staying alert to these signs, your dog's pain can be diagnosed and treated sooner so they can heal and resume a normal, happy life, more quickly.

If your dog shows one or more of these behaviors and you suspect it may be due to pain, notify your veterinarian immediately. If your family veterinarian is unavailable, MedVet is here to help.

Activity Level

- Difficulty getting up from a laying position
- Reluctant to move
- Repetitively gets up and lies down
- Restless
- Seeks more affection than usual
- Trembling, circling, or lying very still

Aggressive

- Acts out of character
For example, a normally aggressive dog may act quiet or docile
- Growls, hisses, bites
- Pins ears back

Daily Habits

- Changes in sleeping or drinking
- Decreased appetite
- Lapses in housetraining
- Sleeps more
- Withdraws from social interaction

Facial Expression

- Flattened ears
- Glazed, wide-eyed, or looks sleepy
"Enlarged pupils"
- Pants excessively when at rest
- Vacant stare

Grooming

- Coat lacks normal shine
- Hair strands up in places

Posture

- Hunched, with hindquarters raised and front end down on the ground
- Lays on its side

Self-Mutilation

- Licking
- Biting
- Scratching a particular part of its body

Self-Protection

- Doesn't put weight on a limb
- Doesn't want to be held or picked up
- Hides
- Limp
- Protects a body part

Vocalizing

- Groaning
- Grunting
- Howling
- Whimpering
- Whining
- Yelping

<https://www.aaha.org/globalassets/02-guidelines/pain-management> accessed September 2019