



PAIN RELIEF OPTIONS FOR CATS

We live in the golden age of pain relief for animals! There are lots of treatment options available to treat pain and discomfort caused by the various diseases and processes that affect modern pets. Each pet is unique and deserves an individualized approach to pain management. Below is some information on the most common types of pain medications, supplements, and treatments currently available. This is not a complete list. Please don't hesitate to ask us any questions. We all want to make your best friend comfortable and happy!

Injectable Medications

Solensia

Benefits: Once monthly arthritis pain control without oral medications (i.e. no pills!). Very safe and effective for chronic use Downsides: Only works for arthritis pain. May require several doses to reach full effectiveness. Newer product.

Adequan

Benefits: Multi-month pain relief after treatment course. Well studied and helpful for preventing further joint damage. Can be combined with Acupuncture to make both last longer. Downsides: May not be fully effective for pain relief on its own. Initial injection course requires frequent vet visits. Typically takes several sessions to see an effect.

Integrated Treatments

Acupuncture

Benefits: Very effective pain control without using medications. Holistic. Tailored for each pet individually. Very well studied and helpful for preventing further damage. Downsides: Typically takes several visits to be fully effective. Your pet may be sore for the rest of the day after sessions. Only performed by specially trained veterinarians.

Physical Therapy/Massage

Benefits: Holistic. Very helpful for improving muscle pain and helping joints. Tailored for each pet individually. Physical therapy can strengthen muscles and dramatically improve quality of life. Pets tend to love massage sessions. Downsides: Performed by specially trained veterinarians and nurses. Takes time to be effective. Pet may be sore after treatments. Some cats do not cooperate for physical therapy sessions.

Medicinal LASER Therapy (NOT a cutting laser)

Benefits: Holistic. Provides warmth under skin to relax muscles. No treatment side effects at standard doses. Tailored for each pet individually. Well studied and helpful for healing muscle damage. Can be combined with Acupuncture to make both last longer. Downsides: May take several visits to be fully effective. Your pet may be a bit sore for the rest of the day after sessions. May not be fully effective alone.

(See reverse side)

Oral Medications and Supplements (Pills, Capsules, and Liquids Given at Home)

(in alphabetical order)

Buprenorphine

Benefits: Very effective for pain control and relaxation in cats. Very rapid effect. Most cats like the taste. Can also be given as an injection. Downsides: Only used short term in most cases. Can cause drowsiness and wobbliness. Due to recent drug regulation changes, this medicine is becoming more challenging to acquire.

CBD (Cannabidiol)

Benefits: Holistic and herbal. Available over the counter. Preliminary research has been promising for pain and seizures. CBD does not contain THC so little to no risk of a “high” CBD Downsides: Significant differences in effectiveness between brands and batches. Not regulated. Dosages are not fully known in animals. Little long-term research due to only recently becoming legal. There are a lot of doubtful advertisements about benefits. Some pets develop odd behaviors.

Chinese Herbs (Body Sore, Fang Feng Tang etc)

Benefits: Holistic and herbal. Treatment is personalized for each pet. Several plants are combined to decrease the need for any one herb. Downsides: Some drug interactions. Can take several weeks to reach full effectiveness. May upset the stomach initially. Best prescribed by specially trained veterinarians.

Fish Oil (also called Omega 3/6 Fatty Acids)

Benefits: Holistic. Available over the counter. Effective for chronic pain conditions. Helpful for preventing further joint damage. Most cats love the flavor. Downsides: Not effective alone for acute pain control. For long term use only. Can cause weight gain or GI problems in some pets. Over the counter products can make your pet smell fishy. Must use fish oil supplements made for cats (seed-based omega acid supplements are used commonly in humans but are not digested by cats).

Gabapentin

Benefits: Has both pain relieving and calming effects. Rapid action. Can be used long or short term. Frequently used with other medications to make both more effective. Inexpensive. Downsides: Can cause drowsiness and wobbliness. Overdoses and drug interactions can be serious. May not be fully effective alone.

Glucosamine Chondroitin

Benefits: Holistic. Available over the counter. May be helpful for preventing further joint damage. Safe and widely used. Downsides: Inconsistent results in research studies. Not effective alone for acute pain control. For long term use only. Not regulated. May have significant variability between brands.

NSAIDs (such as Onsior and Meloxicam)

The equivalent of feline Advil (Do NOT give actual human Advil to cats. It is very dangerous)

Benefits: Very rapid and effective pain control. Excellent for acute muscle or joint pain. No risk of sedation. Very commonly used. NSAID Downsides: Typically, only used short term. Interacts with several other medicines and some interactions are serious. Can upset a pet’s stomach.

Tramadol

Benefits: Can be used long or short term. Helps calm pets that are painful. Inexpensive. Downsides: Interacts with several other medications and overdoses can be serious. Can cause drowsiness. This medicine is bitter and frequently needs to be compounded into a capsule.