

## Stories From Our Clinic: Arthritis in an Old Lab

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

It was a gorgeous fall day when Remy, a 6-year-old black Lab, walked hesitantly into our clinic with his owners. One of our favorite patients, Remy had always seemed thrilled to see us and happy to cooperate throughout his entire exam. However, that day was different, as he seemed extremely uncomfortable. Shockingly, Remy even turned and curled his lip as we examined his back legs.

Remy's owners reported that he had slowed down a bit, had increasing difficulty getting up after naps, and seemed sore after playing fetch. They attributed the changes to normal aging. Even though he had never had any signs of a problem before, our x-rays showed that Remy had a moderate case of hip dysplasia, a painful and degenerative disease of the hips. Hip dysplasia is a developmental problem in which there is laxity in the hip joint(s). Laxity of the joint leads to damage of the cartilage and bone tissues. This results in significant pain as rough, irregular surfaces rub against one another. Unfortunately, Remy was suffering from painful degenerative arthritis in both hips.

### A comprehensive treatment plan geared toward the best results

First, we prescribed a [non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug \(NSAID\)](#), to help reduce joint pain and inflammation. [Rimadyl](#) or [quellin](#), remain our top choices. Additionally, we suggested giving a joint-supporting product like our [Joint Care Premium Plus®](#), to provide Remy with joint-supporting ingredients and nutrients selected specifically for continued optimal joint performance. We also advised Remy's owners to give the NSAID and Joint Care Premium Plus together for the most complete approach to treatment.

We also recommended making environmental changes such as offering an [orthopedic foam bed](#), using a [vehicle ramp](#), providing a heated pad designed just for dogs, using non-slip rugs, and covering up slippery floors to help Remy enjoy an easier life with minimal joint discomfort. And lastly, we told Remy's owners to keep him moving on a daily basis to prevent muscle atrophy and increased joint pain – advising them that slow, steady, low-impact exercise such as swimming and moderate walks would maintain muscle strength, a healthy weight, and ultimately improve Remy's quality of life.

Three months later, Remy's owners' thoughtful, consistent care had paid off. Remy's progress, while initially slow, had continually improved, making him once again the enthusiastic dog who bounded into our clinic with tail wagging, kisses for all our staff, and the happy disposition we all knew and loved.

Hip dysplasia is extremely common in dogs of all ages. And while some dog breeds (especially large and giant breeds) are genetically predisposed to hip dysplasia, the disease can affect young dogs and can be influenced by nutritional and environmental factors. Please contact your veterinarian as soon as possible if you suspect your dog may have hip dysplasia or other joint issues.

Our Recommendations:	
<a href="#">Senior Signature Series Blend Food</a>	<a href="#">Joint Care Premium Plus® Soft Chewables</a>
<a href="#">Quilted Super Deluxe Bed</a>	<a href="#">Dura-Ruff® Lightweight Pet Stairs</a>
<a href="#">Rimadyl®</a>	<a href="#">Dura-Ruff® Nylon Collars and Leads</a>
<a href="#">Mutluks® Hott Doggers</a>	<a href="#">Deluxe Telescoping Ramp</a>

## Weight Management for Senior Dogs

It is estimated that up to half of all pets in the United States suffer from obesity. Extra weight places stress on all the organs and increases the risk of heart and liver disease, diabetes, arthritis, and respiratory disease, and decreases immune function. This is particularly troublesome for senior pets as extra pounds can quickly complicate the pain of arthritis.

#### Calorie intake & expenditure:

While there are many reasons why dogs may become overweight, the underlying factor is excess calories. Overfeeding (surplus calories) and low activity levels (less calorie use) are two areas where pet owners have a direct influence.

#### Regulate calorie intake:

A healthy weight-reduction program does not have to be complicated or difficult. Monitor and control excess calories through smart choices. Take a comprehensive approach and incorporate healthy choices within your daily routine.

- **Scheduled feedings** - If your overweight pet is used to "free-choice" feeding, then provide set, portioned meals. Rather than having a food bowl available at all times, use the [LeBistro Electronic Feeder](#). This programmable feeder automatically dispenses dry food in controlled portions up to three times a day.
- **Switch to a special weight-reduction diet** - Our improved [Adult Lite Food](#) is a well-balanced dog food that contains more easily-digestible, nutrient-rich, meat protein.
- **Choose the treat** - Offer non-food rewards for good behavior. New toys or lavishing attention through grooming or interactive games are great, non-food alternatives. If edible treats are unavoidable, offer low-fat treats such as our [Chicken Fillets](#) in small portions. These snacks are much better than table scraps.