

Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

Volume 17 Issue 3

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Welcome to Dr. Candy Wu

Dr. Candy Wu was born in Taiwan and grew up in a household full of dogs. Her family routinely took in the many strays that roamed their rural town which sparked a lifetime interest in animal health. Dr. Wu is a graduate of UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and has a BS in physiology and animal science from Cornell University.

Dr. Wu worked at a high-volume hospital in Turlock after graduation. She has a special interest in soft tissue surgery and practices with an emphasis on stress free handling – especially for skittish feline patients. She is a member of the AVMA, CVMA, and SVVMA.

Dr. Wu has a Labrador named Rose and a Bengal cross named Loki. She has a passion for cooking and enjoys hiking, traveling, and weight lifting in her free time. She and her husband relocated to the Sacramento area to be closer to family. They decided to settle here specifically after falling in love with the trails and lakes of Folsom.

Dr. Wu is very excited to meet the residents (people and pets) and hopes to become an active member of the Folsom community.

Dr. Wu does speak Mandarin fluently. Although she would like to apologize in advance for her terrible Mandarin vocabulary.



Diagnosing and Treating Osteoarthritis in Dogs and Cats

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative joint disease (DJD), is defined as the progressive and permanent long-term deterioration of the cartilage surrounding the joints. Arthritis is the medical term for inflammation of the joints, while osteoarthritis is the term referring to a form of chronic joint inflammation caused by deterioration of joint cartilage. Older dogs are at the highest risk.

How and When Do You Detect Osteoarthritis in Your Dog?

As our dogs age, things that were once second nature become an effort. Running becomes a stiff walk; the jump to a favorite chair is no longer possible; lying down is accompanied by a deep groan. Today, thanks to advances in veterinary medicine and companion animal care, many dogs are living to a ripe old age. On the downside, that longevity also increases the odds that they'll suffer from some form of degenerative joint disease (DJD), or osteoarthritis.

As dogs get older, the cartilage surfaces of their joints begin to thin, and cartilage cells die. When the cells die, they release enzymes that cause inflammation of the joint capsule and release of excessive joint fluid. Extra bony growths (osteophytes) can develop. With severe cartilage thinning, the normal joint space narrows and the bone beneath the cartilage deteriorates. All of these processes set in motion further changes in the normal functioning of the dog's joint, and an ongoing spiral of pain, lameness, limb disuse/inactivity and muscle atrophy sets in. Many of these changes may be seen on X-rays.

On physical exam, veterinarians rely on a dog's pain response to joint palpation, detection of crepitus (a crackling or grating sensation felt within the joint), observation of gait and the presence of muscle atrophy to diagnose osteoarthritis. Not all dogs—even those with significant DJD—vocalize when they're in pain, but a dog whose muscles are atrophied and limbs are stiff, who requires assistance to rise, and does little more than teeter outside to go to the bathroom is without question suffering pain.

Veterinarian Tools for Diagnosis

Veterinarians have several clinical medical instruments or tools to grade and assess the presence and degree of osteoarthritis in dogs. One is the Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs Index (LOAD) and another is the Canine Osteoarthritis Staging Tool (COAST). Both essentially involve three stages:

1. Grade the Dog
2. Grade the Joint
3. Assess the Stage of Osteoarthritis or Disease Severity

In stage 1, prior to arrival for an examination, the veterinarian will have the dog owner complete a validated owner questionnaire and report the dog's overall level of discomfort.

Stage 2 — The veterinarian will perform a physical examination, assessing the dog's posture while stationary and in mo-

tion, determining how much pain there is on manipulation, assessing the range of movement and taking radiographs or using other diagnostic tools such as MRI or CT.

Stage 3 — The veterinarian will determine the degree of OA in a range of Normal to Severe OA from the LOAD or COAST questionnaires and his/her examination results and work out a treatment plan for the particular dog and owner.

OA Treatment

Treatment recommendations for OA include different approaches and can be either conservative, surgical or a combination of both. All treatment decisions are made based on individual patients and in discussion with the animal owner and veterinarian.

- Weight control is by far the most critical aspect of OA management. Fat produces inflammatory mediators that perpetuate the inflammation process and increased body weight puts additional force on the joints, causing pronounced OA changes and can ultimately limit mobility. In an ideal body weight, you should be able to: 1) feel your dog's ribs but not see them; 2) see an hour-glass figure when viewed from above; 3) see a tucked up belly when viewed from the side.
- Activity modification: High-impact activities such as running or jumping should be limited as they can cause more inflammation and pain. These activities should be replaced with more controlled activity like leash walks that help build the muscles around the joints and will eventually promote joint stability.
- Rehabilitation: Animal rehabilitation such as range of motion exercises, therapeutic exercises, and aqua therapy (underwater treadmill, swimming) help to improve joint mobility, increase muscle mass, and improve exercise endurance.
- Pain control: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are the most commonly used medication for OA pain control. In patients that cannot tolerate NSAIDs other pain medications may be considered.
- Joint supplements: How joint supplements may help alleviate OA pain is not well understood. Chondroitin sulfate, glucosamine sulfate, omega-3-fatty-acid supplementation are the most commonly recommended supplements that do not have severe adverse effects.
- Disease modulating agents: This can be muscle injections (PSGAG) or injections within the joint.
- Surgical management can be indicated and in some instances is the best treatment choice: for example, for knee cranial cruciate ligament rupture, or salvage procedure to remove the painful joint components, such as femoral head and neck excision, fusion of joints, or total joint replacement surgery (most commonly in hips, stifles, elbows).

(Continued on page 3)

Osteoarthritis, cont'd.

(Continued from page 2)

Osteoarthritis in Cats

Diagnosis of osteoarthritis in cats is difficult even for the experienced veterinarian. As new methods of pain assessment are developed, osteoarthritis in cats may soon become a readily-recognized and actively-managed disease, alleviating the silent suffering of many older cats that have the disease.

Cats, unlike most dogs, can tolerate severe orthopedic disease due to their small size and natural agility. Cats generally resent being physically handled or manipulated during clinical examinations, making it difficult for even experienced veterinarians to diagnose OA. The examining veterinarian may not know whether a cat is pulling its foot away because of pain or simply because it doesn't want to be touched. Cats are also notorious for cowering on the examination table and remaining immobile. Due to these obstacles, veterinarians will often simply rely on the cat owner's observations that their pet is not moving around as well as it once did. Veterinarians may rule out osteoarthritis by having owners treat their cats for osteoarthritis and seeing if the owners note any improvement in their cats' quality of life.

The most frequently-affected joints in cats are the elbows and hips, although shoulders and hocks have also been reported. Arthritis of the vertebrae and sternum is also common. Older cats may have osteoarthritis in the limbs and the vertebrae, or vertebrae or limbs only.

Treatment options for cats with osteoarthritis are limited. Non-pharmaceutical treatment options include weight loss for overweight cats, increased exercise, and environmental accommodations (e.g., using litter pans with lower sides for ease of entering and exiting, elevating food and water bowls, and providing soft bedding).

And as a final reminder for arthritic pets—dogs and cats: **do not give your pet over-the-counter pain medicines without consulting your veterinarian!** Dogs and cats have died tragic, unnecessary deaths from a variety of seemingly innocuous pills.

Let's strive to support fit, structurally sound pets; maintain them with excellent nutrition and age and breed appropriate exercise and at optimal body weights; and begin supplemental integrative therapies when they show symptoms of and are diagnosed with degenerative arthritis.

Sources: ACVS American College of Veterinary Surgeons, ELANCO Animal Health, the BARK Magazine, FDA.gov

LOAD: <https://dspace.uevora.pt/rdpc/bitstream/10174/19611/2/liverpool%20OA%20oin%20dogs%20-%20load.pdf>

COAST: <https://www.galliprantfordogs.com/vet/coast>

Adopt us!!!!

Meet our friend Smoky Bear. She is 7 years old, spayed and declawed.

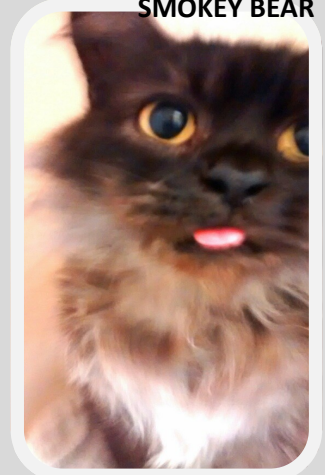
Smokey is up to date on vaccinations and ready for a forever home with an indoor lifestyle. She is friendly with other household pets! Smokey's adoption fee is \$50.

Tigger — A spayed female brown tabby — and John Cena — a neutered male orange tabby (bottom of page) — would love to be adopted together as indoor only kitties—they LOVE each other. They have been with their foster mom since birth.

The adoption fee for both kitties was \$160 but is now \$80 for the pair (including spay/castration, FeLV/FIV tested negative, HCP 3yr, RV 1yr, and microchip) after one of our wonderful clients paid half of the adoption fee!

Please email — kschwartz@blueravineanimalhospital.com — if you are interested in any of these beautiful kitties.

SMOKEY BEAR



JOHN CENA



JOHN CENA



TIGGER





1770 Prairie City Road
Folsom, CA 95630
Phone: 916 984-0990
Fax: 916 984-6510



**This Month:
Diagnosing and Treating Osteoarthritis**

BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.
For emergencies outside regular office hours, please call MarQueen Pet Emergency & Specialty, 916 757-6600
or Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center, 916 362-3111.

www.blueravineanimalhospital.com

Coupon

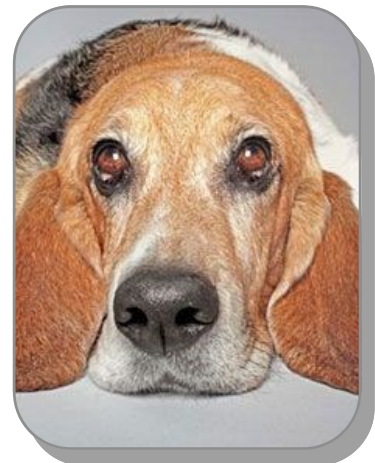
Canine Senior Wellness Profile (\$513.70), with coupon \$256.50!

Includes exam, comprehensive blood work, urinalysis, intestinal parasite screen, heartworm test, and tick-borne diseases screen.

Feline Senior Wellness Profile (\$558.10) with coupon \$236.50!

Includes exam, comprehensive blood work, urinalysis, feline viral testing (FeLV/FIV), and heartworm test.

BLUE RAVINE ANIMAL HOSPITAL
1770 Prairie City Road, Folsom, CA 95630
916-984-0990



**Coupon Expiration: September 30, 2019
Please make an appointment!**