

## My Senior Cat Has Stiffness in Legs

**CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, discusses arthritis and supplements.**

*By Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

Posted: December 25, 2009, 3 a.m. EST

**Q:** My Siamese cat is 19 years young. She eats and drinks well and her fur is soft and shiny. The only problem she seems to be having lately is her hind legs. Could you recommend maybe a vitamin she could take so she's not so stiff? Thank you so much.

**A:** It sounds like your Siamese cat is arthritic. A study was published a few years ago that showed that 90 percent of cats over 10 years of age had some radiographic evidence of arthritis. I think you'd be hard-pressed to find any 19 year old cat that wasn't a little stiff with some degree of arthritis.

There are several things you can administer to your cat for arthritis. Supplements containing glucosamine and chondroitin are beneficial for many cats (and people!) with arthritis. There are several commercial veterinary products available. The ones I'm most familiar with are Cosequin and Dasuquin. These supplements provide the building blocks for the body to synthesize the fluid that bathes and lubricates the joints, and helps damaged cartilage heal itself.

If supplementation with glucosamine and chondroitin don't seem to help much, your cat may require pain medication. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs seem to be best. Aspirin can be given, but it has to be very carefully dosed. A better choice is a drug called Metacam. A recent study showed it to be safe and effective for arthritis in cats; however, some people feel that Metacam is best avoided in cats. (See CatChannel's Forum for further spirited discussion on the use of Metacam in cats.)