

Equine Arthritis

Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD)

What is equine arthritis?

DJD (degenerative joint disease) describes a process in the joint where the joint cartilage is progressively destroyed and changes occur in the associated bones and soft tissues.

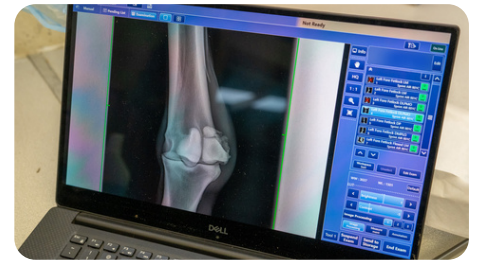


Is it common in horses?

DJD is a very common problem affecting many horses, especially senior horses. It can be a painful disease that causes inflammation within the joint and commonly affects hocks, pasterns, front fetlocks, and coffin joints although any joint may be affected.

What are the signs of DJD?

- Lameness
- Reluctance to work
- A change in behaviour
- Stiffness
- Muscle wastage
- Effusion (swelling) of the joints
- Reluctance to lift limbs for the farrier



How is DJD diagnosed?

- Clinical examination by your vet: this may involve watching your horse move both in hand and possibly under saddle
- Flexion tests
- Nerve blocks
- Radiographs

Further diagnostics can include:

- MRI
- Nuclear Scintigraphy (Bone scanning)
- Arthroscopy



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How is DJD managed?

DJD cannot be reversed, so good management is essential to keep the horse comfortable and reduce the pain.

- Managing the horse's weight is essential: overweight horses put additional strain on their joints
- If possible, gentle and regular exercise can be beneficial
- Regular turnout to keep your horse moving
- Good farriery is essential
- A joint supplement can help to manage DJD: speak to your vet, or a member of our team, to discuss which supplement would suit your horse best.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs, prescribed by your vet, can help to reduce the pain
- Intra-articular medication (medications injected into the joint)
- Other systemic medications such as bisphosphonates or pentosan polysulphate



MAYES & SCRINE
EQUINE VETERINARY PRACTICE



Any questions?
Please contact the office on:
01306 628222
office@msvets.co.uk