Many pets develop some form of joint disease during their lives. It can be mild, even unnoticeable to the pet owner, or it can be debilitating, severely affecting the pet's quality of life or even causing complete lameness. The majority of cases fall somewhere in between.

While some pets may develop joint disease in the first half of their lives, signs usually do not appear until the latter half of life, which varies depending on your pet's breed. Dogs are more susceptible to arthritis than cats, however, many cats do suffer from arthritis.

The most common signs of joint disease include stiffness, limping, or favoring a limb - particularly after sleep or resting, inability to rise, reluctance to jump or even climb stairs, and noticeable pain.

There are many diseases that affect the joints of cats, so many, in fact, that there are 10 major classifications.

Joint diseases occur as a result of:

- Ligament, tendon, or muscle disease, e.g., ruptured anterior cruciate ligament
- Fractures involving the joint
- Developmental disorders, e.g., hip or elbow dysplasia
- Congenital disorders
- Dietary and hormonal disease, e.g., hyperparathyroidism, obesity
- Metabolic disorders, e.g., diabetes
- Cancer
- Degenerative joint disease (osteoarthritis)
- Inflammatory joint disease, e.g., progressive polyarthritis
- Degenerative spinal joint disease, e.g., intervertebral disc disease