

PAIN IN PETS

Pain doesn't usually look like pet owners expect it to. Dogs and cats rarely whimper or cry out except when they actually incur an injury – the moment you step on the tail or the bone breaks. Instead they get quiet. They may cry or bite if you try to interact with them or move them but for the most part they are silent when they suffer. They may tremble,



stare into space or become withdrawn and hide. Some cats will actually purr when they are painful or ill.

Both pets in these pictures are extremely painful. Their heads are down, they are paying no attention to their surroundings and they are standing or lying in an awkward position that doesn't look relaxed or natural.

Rules of thumb for diagnosing pain:
*Stiffness or lameness always mean pain, regardless of whether the pet

is still eating and behaving fairly normally. People don't moan from a sprained ankle but it still hurts.

*Dental disease hurts, too, even if the pet is still eating.

*If the eye is red or squinting, it hurts

*If the ear is red or the pet is shaking its head or holding it cocked to the side, it hurts

*Anything raw, red or swollen hurts

*If the pet isn't eating, playing or interacting with you he may be in pain

*Guarding any part of the body or a tucked up abdomen means pain. Both pets in these pictures have abdominal pain.

*Reluctance to walk, jump or go up and down stairs usually means back pain. In cats, not jumping up as high is often a sign of arthritis.



To learn more, follow this link to the Pain Assessment handout on our website:
<http://bestfriendsvet.com/pdf/Pain3pgs.pdf>