

# RECOGNISING SIGNS OF *Pain in Dogs*



Dogs have evolved to conceal signs of injury, disease and pain to prevent them being perceived as an easy target for predators in the wild. Like their wild ancestors, our domesticated dog breeds are practised at hiding signs of pain and discomfort but there are still some important clues to look for.

## *Typical signs of pain in dogs*

General behavioural changes are the most obvious sign your pet may be in distress.



- Shaking
- Flattened ears
- Low posture
- Aggression
- Grumpy temperament
- Panting or crying
- Excessive licking or scratching a specific area
- Reluctance to play, interact or exercise
- Lameness or limping
- Stiffness after rest
- Loss of appetite

## *On touch or inspection you may notice:*



- Licking lips
- Flinching
- Turning head
- Moving to avoid touch
- Crying or vocally reacting
- Panting
- Increase in respiratory or heart rate
- Warmth, redness or swelling of a specific area

## *Will these signs always be noticeable?*

As only a few of these behaviours may be seen – and they may be very subtle in less acutely painful conditions – what's most important is to look for any pattern in changes to your dog's behaviour.



## *Check to see:*

- If certain behaviours become common after exercise
- If they are most noticeable in the morning or evening
- Whether they are more likely to occur after a long rather than short walk

Monitoring your pet in this way will help your vet build a better picture of the problem.

To find out more, read our Fact Sheet on Recognising signs of pain in your pet:  
[vetspecialists.co.uk/fact-sheets-post/recognising-signs-of-pain-in-your-pet](https://vetspecialists.co.uk/fact-sheets-post/recognising-signs-of-pain-in-your-pet)