



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Lucy" - English Mastiff with Osteoarthritis



Lucy

"Lucy" is a big girl by any standards. An English Mastiff weighing in at over 11 and a 1/2 stone at her peak. She has been plagued with arthritis throughout her 6 year lifespan.

A number of joint conditions including "osteochondrosis" and "cruciate ligament disease" has left her with severe debilitating osteoarthritis affecting multiple joints including both her elbows and knees.

Osteoarthritis is not a condition that can be cured in the sense of returning the patient to complete normality. In most cases, some residual problems will remain in the affected joints.

The goals in the treatment of degenerative joint disease are to alleviate the animal's discomfort, to prevent the occurrence of further degenerative changes, and to restore the affected joint or joints to as near normal and pain-free function as possible.

In the acute stages of DJD, when joint effusion is present and the inflammatory process is at its peak, exercise should not be allowed. Our patients are at somewhat of a disadvantage in that even the act of moving from one spot to another may involve use of an affected joint, whereas a person may use a crutch to aid in reducing the stress.

While the relationship between obesity per se and DJD in humans remains controversial, reduction to ideal weight would seem sensible, since degenerative changes are initiated or aggravated by excessive or abnormally directed pressures on articular cartilage.

There is no doubt that "Lucy" has felt the benefit of now weighing in at a mere 10 stone! Medical therapy includes a wide variety of pills and potions, each with essentially the same purpose-to reduce inflammation and act as an analgesic of which "Lucy" has had her share.

Currently, however she also seems to be benefiting from a drug used to modify the arthritic disease process in the hope of improving joint integrity and consequently function.

This drug "pentosan polyphosphate" started life as an anticoagulant, is used in America to treat humans with cystitis and has been used to treat patients in this country who have become affected with the human version of "mad cow disease".

Let's hope we only ever need to treat "Lucy" for her joints!!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

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