

Why Is My Dog Limping?

Family Matters

Few things worry a dog guardian more than seeing their dog suddenly limp.

Sometimes it happens after an energetic game of fetch. Sometimes it appears gradually over days or weeks. Occasionally, it seems to disappear just as quickly as it arrived.

So how do you know when it's something minor—and when it's time to worry?

At Amity, we believe understanding the possible causes of lameness helps you make confident decisions for your dog's health. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you recognise problems early and seek the right care at the right time.

Limping Is a Symptom, Not a Diagnosis

A limp simply tells us that something is uncomfortable.

The cause could be as simple as a small cut on the paw or as complex as a ligament injury, arthritis or a broken bone.

Our job is to find the reason behind the limp—not just treat the symptom.

Start With the Paw

Before assuming the problem is serious, have a gentle look at your dog's paw.

Check for:

- Thorns or grass seeds.
- Cuts or cracked pads.
- Broken nails.
- Swelling.
- Something caught between the toes.

If your dog won't let you examine the paw or seems very painful, don't force it. It's better to let your vet investigate safely.

Not Every Limp Is an Emergency

A mild limp after vigorous exercise may simply be a minor strain that improves with rest.

However, your dog should be examined promptly if they:

- Cannot put any weight on the leg.
- Cry out in pain.
- Have severe swelling.
- Have an obvious deformity.
- Were hit by a car or suffered a significant fall.
- Have a wound that's bleeding heavily.

If your dog's limp is mild but hasn't improved within 24–48 hours, it's also worth arranging an examination.

Older Dogs Deserve Attention Too

It's easy to assume an older dog is "just slowing down."

Sometimes that's true.

But slowing down can also be the first sign of arthritis, joint disease or another painful condition.

The good news is that many of these conditions can be managed successfully, helping your dog stay active and comfortable for much longer.

Growing older should never mean living with unnecessary pain.

Don't Give Human Painkillers

One of the biggest mistakes well-meaning owners make is giving human painkillers.

Medicines such as ibuprofen or diclofenac can be extremely dangerous for dogs and should never be given unless specifically prescribed by your vet.

If your dog is in pain, contact us first so we can recommend safe and appropriate treatment.

Early Assessment Makes a Difference

The sooner we understand why your dog is limping, the sooner we can decide the best course of action.

Sometimes all that's needed is rest.

Sometimes an X-ray or further investigation is appropriate.

Sometimes we simply provide reassurance.

At Amity, **Amity Essential Membership includes unlimited health checks**, so if you're ever unsure whether a limp is something to worry about, we'd much rather assess your dog early than have you worry at home.

Listen to What Your Dog Is Telling You

Dogs rarely complain.

Instead, they communicate through changes in how they walk, play and move.

A limp is your dog's way of saying, "**Something doesn't feel right.**"

By recognising that message early, you're giving them the best chance of a quick recovery and a comfortable future.

Because they're not just your dog.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.