Disorders of the Locomotor System

The locomotor system comprises bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and sinews. Locomotion means to move forward, to discover something new; it stands for freedom and further development. Locomotion stimulates blood circulation, metabolism, digestion and lymphatic circulation.

Over time, our pets’ living conditions have changed. While formerly cats were expected to catch mice and were able to stray across fields and meadows just as they wanted, changes in housing conditions force many of today’s cats to only live indoors. Numerous dogs live the life of a couch potato, their daily walks often just a hurried rush when their owners come home from work. While Fido has been waiting all day long for this special event, after a long hard day at work his master just wants to get it over and done with. It is thus not surprising that dogs sometimes cannot withstand this “pressure”. A comparatively early restriction of free movement and changed environmental conditions today cause increasingly more disorders of the locomotor system.

The most significant of these disorders are joint (arthropathy) and spinal disorders. The articular disorders arthritis and arthrosis are frequently suffered by cats and dogs.

**Arthritis** is an acute inflammation of the joints. Possible causes are damage or injuries. The affected joint is almost always swollen, sensitive to pain, feels hot and is favoured.

**Arthrosis** is a chronic degenerative joint disorder. It might be caused by traumata, arthritis that has not healed or incorrect and excessive use. The result is an inflammation of the articular mucosa (synovialis), which impairs the nourishment of the articular cartilage. The cartilage becomes damaged and the articular surfaces are destroyed. As a consequence, the joints are continuously reshaped while bone swellings form at the edge of the joint.

Symptoms are lameness and mobility restrictions of different degrees of severity.

The most frequent spinal disorders suffered by dogs are spondylosis and disc prolapse. **Spondylosis** is characterised by bridge-shaped bone neoplasia (exotoses) with degenerative processes in the intervertebral discs. They are usually found in the cervical and lumbar vertebrae. Possible causes are traumata, inflammations or damages to the mesenchyme (the embryonic tissue). Disc prolapses (so-called “slipped disc”) are characterised by either a hardened intervertebral disc prolapsing into the spinal canal or by the disc nucleus mass entering the spinal canal. As a result, the spinal marrow is compressed (crushed), which leads to signs of paralysis or pain.
Quite frequently, disorders of the major joints such as dysplasia of the hip joint or elbow or osteochondrosis lead to increased **muscle atrophy**.

The most important mushrooms in treating disorders of the locomotor system are **Reishi** and **Shiitake**. Reishi has an anti-inflammatory effect that resembles that of cortisone. Additionally, it improves the blood circulation, the oxygen supply and blood supply to the joint (articular perfusion). In combination with Shiitake, it effectively alleviates pain. Shiitake is capable of reversing limb deformation. **Auricularia** promotes the perfusion, improves blood fluidity and thus the oxygen supply. Moreover, it has a moisturising and anti-inflammatory effect on the articular mucosa. **Pleurotus** strengthens sinews, ligaments and cartilage. It improves muscular functions and encourages the formation of bone.

If the joints are swollen, **Polyporus** supports the lymphatic flow.

**Note**

*The effects described are based on the ingestion of medicinal mushroom powder which is prepared from the whole mushroom. Please seek advice from your animal therapist before using.*