

Pick a bone with cancer

**PET VET
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PAIN originating from bones, such as joint pain, is never anyone's idea of good news, but sometimes when dogs suffer from this kind of pain it can mean a life-threatening disease is about to make its unwelcome presence felt.

Some old dogs suffer from arthritic degeneration of their joints, but a small number also suffer from another condition which may be mistaken for degenerative joint pain.

Osteosarcoma is the most common of the bone cancers suffered by dogs and is one which more often strikes older, larger breeds.

The reason it can be mistaken for arthritis is that its early symptoms can be quite similar.

A dog with either disease may begin having some lameness or may chew at the area or favour it constantly, and some bone may appear thickened or swollen.

While arthritis is bad enough, it progresses far more slowly, becoming a chronic disease affecting the joints.

Osteosarcoma is a tumour which develops rapidly from inside the bone, replacing healthy bone tissue and becoming severely painful, often within a couple of months.

The affected bone is usually weaker than healthy bone and sometimes fractures can occur, which can be difficult to repair. The cancer may develop in any bone but it is much more likely to occur in the ends of the long bones which make up several of the major leg joints.

In the rear leg it is found in the bones of the knee or stifle joint; and in the front leg at the lower part of the shoulder or at the bottom of the radius bone at what would be the dog's wrist joint.

The affected area is likely to become acutely sore, and manipulation of it becomes painful.

The disease is usually diagnosed with x-rays. The rapidly growing tumour has a distinctive appearance when x-rayed, but a small bone biopsy might also be needed.

Because of this extreme pain, amputation is often considered the best option. Dogs don't waste any time feeling sorry for themselves and usually cope very well with the loss of a limb.

However, osteosarcoma is also known as a disease which may easily spread to other parts of the body, often the lungs. Amputation will not increase survival time but it will remove the source of pain.

There are other treatments, such as chemotherapy, which can also be used to prolong the life of a dog with this cancer.

The moral of the story is not to ignore their bone pain. It is unlikely that a dog with some lameness will have this cancer but, if they do, the quicker it is diagnosed the better the outcome for the dog.

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Ikea Sommar fly swats 95¢ pack of two



Bazaar Furniture Traders California trolley with folding sides. \$399 www.bazaarfurniture.com.au

Barbecue days

Stay out of the kitchen over the holidays and cook outdoors, advises **Michelle Collins**



Great Dane Furniture Gense BBQ grill tools \$295. www.greatdanefurniture.com

THE start of the holidays means the humble barbecue will get a good workout with the planned Christmas parties and impromptu get-togethers.

No matter what sort of barbie you buy — from the smallest and simplest to the more elaborate and expensive — make sure you read the instructions, especially any safety advice.

If you already have a barbecue, make sure you give it a thorough

check-up and clean, especially looking for leaks in the gas bottle and lines.

Of course, if you are always running out of gas you might want to think about an electric barbecue.

The Black and Stone range, for example, has a heat-insulating convection roasting hood, twin cooking elements and plate and grill.

And if space is an issue, look for the table grill.



Sunnylife multi stripe apron \$29.95. www.sunnylife.com.au



Hardtfind grill with table — grill (49cm) \$995; dome lid \$195; legs \$140. www.hardtfind.com.au



Red Centre Caringbah BBQ \$499. www.homehardware.com.au



Black & Stone electric convection barbecue \$599. www.blackandstone.com