

Panosteitis

- Panosteitis is a painful inflammation of the long bones in the limbs.
- It affects young, medium- to large-breed dogs, especially German shepherds.
- The cause of panosteitis is not known.
- Signs include lameness in one or multiple limbs.
- Painful episodes may last for days or weeks and recur periodically.
- Diagnosis is based on physical examination (evidence of pain in the bones) and radiographs (x-rays).
- The disease usually resolves on its own by the time the dog is 2 years old.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) can help relieve pain during episodes of lameness.

What Is Panosteitis?

Panosteitis is a painful inflammation of the long bones in the limbs of young, medium- to large-breed dogs. The disease is common in German shepherds, German shepherd mixes, and basset hounds. Male dogs are four times more likely to experience panosteitis than females. The condition usually appears between the ages of 5 months to 1½ years.

What Causes Panosteitis?

The exact cause of this disease is unknown.

What Are the Signs of Panosteitis?

Dogs with panosteitis are typically healthy but experience sudden lameness despite having no history of trauma. They will often favor a limb or even carry it to avoid putting any weight on it. If more than one limb is involved, the dog will have shifting leg

lameness. In severe cases, the dog may lose his or her appetite and experience weight loss.

The pain may last for a few days or several weeks. Bouts of lameness may recur from time to time, but they usually resolve by the time the dog is 2 years old.

How Is Panosteitis Diagnosed?

During physical examination, dogs with panosteitis may show signs of pain when the veterinarian applies slight pressure to the long bones of the affected leg(s). Usually, radiographs (x-rays) are required to identify bone changes that occur with panosteitis. In rare cases, your veterinarian may recommend a bone biopsy to make sure that a bacterial or fungal infection or bone cancer is not causing the pain.

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How Is Panosteitis Treated?

Panosteitis usually resolves on its own, without treatment. However, your veterinarian may recommend nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) to relieve pain and make your dog more comfortable during episodes. Periodic recheck appointments with your veterinarian are a good idea to make sure that your pet is comfortable and other orthopedic problems are not involved.