

# PEOPLE & PETS

## TV Star Doris Roberts Gives Voice To Arthritic Dogs

(NAPS)—“Everybody” knows and loves Doris Roberts for her Emmy-Award winning role as Marie Barone on TV’s hit comedy “Everybody Loves Raymond.” However, not everyone knows that she suffers from the pain of arthritis. So does her 11-year-old black Labrador retriever, Max. Because the signs of arthritis can be so difficult for pet owners to recognize, the two have teamed up to raise dog owners’ awareness of canine arthritis pain.

Arthritis is even more prevalent in dogs than it is in humans. In the United States, one out of every six people (43 million) is affected by arthritis compared to one in five adult dogs (more than eight million). As humans and dogs grow older, arthritis incidence increases. Nearly 50 percent of people 65 and older have arthritis. Likewise, canine arthritis incidence doubles in dogs older than 7 years. And more than half of all dogs with arthritis aren’t being treated.

“Many people don’t realize that dogs experience arthritis pain, but they do,” says Roberts. “There’s no reason for a dog to be in pain. I want people to realize that dogs do have arthritis, and that something can be done to help them.

“We thought Max was just slowing down and becoming an old dog,” adds Roberts. “We had no idea he had arthritis. Fortunately, we got him to a veterinarian who diagnosed arthritis and prescribed treatment.”

Veterinarian Bernadine Cruz, Laguna Hills (Calif.) Animal Hospital, recommends dog owners learn the early signs of the condition and watch for them. “Pain and stiffness aren’t normal, even in older dogs,” she says. “Subtle signs that might be passed off as, ‘He’s just getting old,’ could actually point to the first stages of osteoarthritis. And even the first stages are very painful.”



**Doris Roberts recognized the signs of canine arthritis in her dog, Max, and took him to their veterinarian for help.**

Signs of canine arthritis include tiring easily on walks, limping, lagging behind or appearing stiff after activity, reluctance to climb steps or jump up or being slow to rise from a resting position.

“These first indications are more likely to be noticed by the pet owner in the dog’s home environment,” notes Cruz. “If you notice any signs of pain, schedule an osteoarthritis exam with your veterinarian. With an early diagnosis, we can provide prescription pain relief, like Rimadyl, to keep the dog active and mobile so it will be less likely to become overweight, which puts even more strain on the affected joints. And make sure to never give your dog human medications like aspirin. It can cause harmful stomach ulcers.”

“Max and I are examples of how it’s possible to live full, active lives with arthritis,” says Roberts. “It broke my heart to see Max suffer. But since 1999, he has been taking Rimadyl, an arthritis pain medication made especially for dogs. Because he’s no longer in pain, Max is vital, playful and happy. It helped return his zest for life.”