

Peterborough West Animal Hospital

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The Senior Years

It is inevitable our best furry friends will at one point reach their senior years. Cats and dogs age much quicker than people. By the time a pet reaches the age of two they are already into adulthood.

Fact: 1 year of a pet's life is equal to 4 years of a person's once adulthood is reached for the pet.

Each pet ages differently with several influencing factors

- ❖ Size and Breed - smaller dogs usually live longer
- ❖ Environmental Factors - outdoor pets are more susceptible to injury or disease
- ❖ Body Condition/Proper Nutrition - obese animals have higher health risks
- ❖ Medical Conditions - such as kidney or liver disease

As devoted pet owners we all wish to preserve the longevity and quality of our pets lives. Recognizing the signs of aging we can help manage our furry friends through their golden years.

Signs of aging in our pets:

1. Declining activity level -you might notice your pet sleeps more, exercises less. Potentially leading to obesity. Obese animals are at risk for developing diabetes, heart and lung problems, joint problems, and constipation.
2. Vision loss - you may notice your pet bumping into objects such as furniture and walls. Changes to your pet's vision usually start to occur around 7-8 years of age.
3. Heart and Lung Disease - sometimes characterized by shortness of breath after exercise, coughing, wheezing, increase in panting.
4. Kidney Disease - can be indicated by an increase in drinking and urinating, loss of appetite, vomiting, and lethargy.
5. Dental Disease - swelling and pain of the gums can make an animal eat small meals, chew sideways, drop food but rarely go off food. Tartar build up and gum disease also leads to bad breath, and infection.
6. Confusion/Disorientation - older pets seem to "forget", they may vocalize more, seem disinterested in their surroundings or owners, and may sleep more.
7. Arthritis/Joint Pain - shown by decreased mobility, limping, abnormal gait, pain, and sleeping a lot.
8. Hearing Loss - this is usually a gradual change, your pet may easily be startled or hard to rouse.

At Peterborough West Animal Hospital we recommend a wellness program best tailored to the needs of your pet. Our doctors recommend a bi-annual exam over the age of 13. Regular examinations will help ensure detection of age related disease. **The earlier the diagnosis and treatment for your pet, the better the outcome.**

In this Issue:

Factors influencing my pets age

Signs of Aging

What can I do for my senior pet?

Geriatric Wellness Profile

Our special wellness program for geriatric patients include a thorough physical exam and assessment of your pet's eyes, ears, mouth, heart and lungs, internal organs, nervous and endocrine system, and skin. Dr.Sargent and Dr. Gambling will discuss what to expect and what to watch for as your pet gets older. As well as helping you find a nutritional diet best suited to your pet's needs.

Our geriatric blood and urine profile allow us to see what changes are occurring inside the body, for a full diagnostic report of your pet.

Recommended Tests:

Complete Blood Count (CBC) - examines red and white blood cells, and platelets.

Biochemistry Profile - assesses liver, kidney, pancreas, muscle, and bone function, as well as electrolytes and thyroid function.

Complete Urinalysis - this evaluates kidney function, as well as checks for infection, urinary crystals, and neoplasia.



Your loyal friend deserves the best care possible. Let us help your pet thrive during their golden years. November is Geriatric month. Please call our clinic for all the help and support you need.