

Changing needs as they age

You may need to change your pet's environment as they age.

Some things to consider:

- Appropriate bedding such as orthopaedic pet beds to relieve pressure on joints.
- Ramps to accommodate difficulties using stairs.
- Arthritic pets may benefit from rugs over hard or slippery surfaces to help them get around.
- Ensure easy access to their needs, e.g. their litter box, food/water bowl.
- Hydrotherapy and therapeutic massage.
- Provide additional heating or cooling as appropriate, e.g. buy them a jacket, ensure there is adequate warmth on their bed and keep them indoors.
- Additional grooming and nail clipping.

Dental care

Like us humans, our pets need regular dental checks to help prevent dental disease and the pain that this can cause.

Dental disease often goes unnoticed by even the most caring of owners, so it is recommended that dental checks be performed regularly, e.g. every six months for senior pets.

Signs that you may notice:

- Bad breath.
- Distress and rubbing of the mouth.
- Loose or missing teeth.
- Loss of appetite or a preference for soft foods.
- Facial swelling.
- Bleeding or red gums.
- Chewing food in one side of the mouth only.
- Increased salivation.

Prevention of dental disease is important through all stages of your pet's life. If left untreated it can cause other issues such as bone infection in the mouth and other areas of the body. If the infection enters the bloodstream, it can affect organ function. Ask your veterinarian for advice.



Mental stimulation

For both cats and dogs, mental stimulation can help with the physical and cognitive changes that occur in their senior age.

The fact is you can teach an old pet new tricks!

Introduce your pet to new toys, change up their exercise routine to make things more exciting and as long as there are no signs of aggression or anxiety, encourage their interaction with other pets and humans!

Quality of life

Keep a look out for general issues with your senior pet and seek veterinary advice if you are concerned.

Be aware of the following signs and symptoms that will let you know if your pet is not themselves:

- Drinking more water than usual.
- Weight loss or weight gain.
- Change in appetite – increased or decreased.
- Coughing.
- Lumps.
- Decrease in activity.
- Reluctance to move or walking stiffly.
- Difficulty in settling or resting comfortably.
- Vocalising unusually.
- Confusion or disorientation.
- Toileting accidents.

The senior years with your pet can be such a beautiful time; you can help your cat or dog feel happier and increase their quality of life in many ways:

- Spending more time cuddling and patting your pet.
- Be patient with your old friend; they may not be as quick as they once were and may not see or hear as well as they once could, but treat them with kindness, just like you would an elderly relative or friend.

Schedule a senior health check with one of our vets to tailor a health plan for your pet in their twilight years.

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Help Keep Your Senior Pet Happy and Healthy



Cats and dogs over seven are generally classified as seniors



Senior Pet Care

Just as humans do, cats and dogs need some extra love and care as they age.

Many changes can occur as our lovable pets get older such as hearing loss, reduced activity or loss of eyesight. But some changes, for example, a disease, can be preventable or made manageable.

There are many ways to help your pet mature into older age, helping them live a happier and healthier life.

Similar to humans, our pets are living longer than they used to, due to improvement in animal diets, veterinary medicine and the shift of pets being treated as part of the family.

Generally, pets are considered seniors when they are seven years and older – but this is breed and size dependent.

Cat years	Human years
7	54
10	63
15	78

Dog years	Human years
7	44 to 56
10	56 to 78
15	76 to 115

Did you know? Smaller breeds tend to live longer than larger breeds.

Tips For Caring For Your Senior Pet

Regular check-ups

Prevention is better than cure!

Regular check-ups help early diagnosis, treatment and hopefully cure of disease. Where cure is not possible, management can be started early, allowing your senior pet to live a longer more comfortable life.

Consider check-ups every 6-12 months or as advised by your veterinarian.

- A full physical examination.
- Blood and urine tests are often recommended - can help detect disease in its early stages and optimise management.

Some of the common issues found in senior pets:

Cats

- Kidney disease.
- Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland).
- Diabetes.
- Overgrown nails causing discomfort.
- Fur matting because they can't groom.

Dogs

- Skin growths and tumours.
- Eyes – cataracts, dry eyes, glaucoma.
- Dementia/cognitive dysfunction.
- Incontinence.

Both

- Arthritis.
- Heart disease.
- Cancer.
- Weight changes.
- Dental disease.



Diet

As your cat or dog advances into their senior years just like humans, they will become less active, and their metabolism will also slow down, this means changing your pets' diet as fewer calories are required.

Premium quality pet food for seniors can contain extra support for their muscles, joints, skin and brain. Supplements available include 4Cyte, Glyde, and joint support diets.

It is important also to keep your pet at their ideal body weight to reduce the risk of related health issues.

Your vet will examine body weight and condition during a physical examination to see if they are at the ideal weight and provide advice on the right diet. (Every case may be different, and some pets may need a prescribed diet as part of their health plan).

Mobility

Keeping regular exercise to maintain mobility as your pet ages is important. It can also help with:

- Muscle mass.
- Body weight.
- Cognitive function.

Arthritic senior pets still require some exercise to prevent their joints from seizing up, but they require lower intensity shorter walks; otherwise, they will become lame after exercise. Chat to your vet for advise on your pet's needs.

Top tip: It is important to make small, gradual changes to any pets exercise regime.

