

## Senior Care

# DID YOU KNOW YOUR PETS' SENIOR YEARS START AT AGE SEVEN?

## Frequently asked questions

### My pet's always been healthy. Why should I worry now that they're a little older?

- Just like people, your cat's or dog's health will change as it ages. And because pets age faster than people, major health changes can happen quickly.
- Especially for senior pets, early detection and treatment can help them live longer, healthier lives. Regular checkups can uncover hidden disease before it is clinically apparent.
- Many infectious diseases show few signs during initial infection. As disease progresses and signs become visible, it may be harder for senior pets to fight infection.



### What particular risks does my senior pet face?

- Similar to people in their "golden years," senior pets have an increased risk of diabetes, heart and endocrine disease, and cancer. Because these diseases show few signs in early stages, preventive health care and routine blood work are very important.
- Issues with mobility often affect pets as they become older. Arthritis or stiffness in the joints can be painful and lead to decreased exercise and activity levels, or make simple tasks like climbing stairs more difficult.
- Pets with mobility issues often face additional risks associated with a medication for pain/inflammation (NSAIDs). Without monitoring, NSAIDs can affect the kidneys and liver over time. Regular blood work will ensure your pet stays healthy and pain free.
- Also like aging people, senior pets have a greater risk of gaining excess weight because of changes in metabolism, exercise levels and more. As a pet's weight increases, so does their risk for developing heart and liver disease.

### What can I do to help?

- Schedule an annual wellness visit for your pet. Regular checkups can help your veterinarian detect disease sooner, even if your pet shows no signs of being sick.
- Watch for changes in your pet's health. Tell your veterinarian immediately if you notice any changes in behavior, diet, exercise/activity level or mobility.
- Help your pet live a healthy lifestyle. Nutrition and exercise can help your pet live longer and healthier, so make sure they eat right and play often.

