

Caring for Your Senior Pet

Thanks to advances in veterinary medicine, pets are living longer than ever before. However, with this increased lifespan comes an increase in the types of ailments that can afflict senior pets. As pets reach the golden years, usually averaged at 7 years of age, there are a variety of conditions and diseases that they can face, including weight and mobility changes, osteoarthritis, kidney, heart and liver disease. Just as the health care needs of humans change as we age, the same applies to pets. It is critical for pet owners to work closely with their veterinarian to devise a health plan that is best for their senior pet.



AAHA (The American Animal Hospital Association) recommends that healthy senior dogs and cats visit the veterinarian every six months for a complete exam and laboratory testing. There is no substitute for a thorough and complete history and physical examination. The purposes of clinical screening of healthy pets are to establish a baseline assessment for future comparison and to detect subclinical abnormalities at a time when preventive and therapeutic intervention may have the most benefit. It has been shown that early diagnosis and treatment, the principal benefits of regular examinations, can dramatically slow progression of such conditions as renal disease, periodontal disease and osteoarthritis.

What to Expect at Dutch Fork Animal Hospital:

Your pet's first Comprehensive Senior Exam appointment will consist of a complete physical exam, wellness blood work including T4, urinalysis, and fecal floatation. Dogs will also have their annual heartworm test and outdoor cats will be screened for Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. Wellness blood work

give the doctor information regarding your pet's internal organ function and screens for early signs of disease.

When your pet returns six months later, their doctor will perform another thorough senior examination. Our pets age much quicker than we do and we want to ensure that your pets age with a clean bill of health. Canines will have a routine parasite screening and Bordetella vaccine and felines will have a blood pressure screening performed in addition to their exam. Your pet's veterinarian will use this time to discuss other options for health screening. These screenings may be specific to your pet's breed, such as intraocular pressure for glaucoma, Schirmer Tear Test to screen for dry eye, radiography, ultrasound, and echocardiography to detect change in heart function.

Dutch Fork Animal Hospital is prepared to provide your beloved older pet with optimal health care that will allow them to age comfortably.

Dutch Fork Animal Hospital offers a wide variety of services and products for your aging pet.



We offer various modalities for treating your cat's hyperthyroidism including oral medication, transdermal ointments, and diet change. Click the food bag for more information!



There are a variety of oral joint supplements available for both cats and dogs. Adequan is an intramuscular injection that improves joint health and mobility. This can safely be used in cats and dogs.



K-laser uses laser therapy to decrease pain, inflammation, and promote healing. Click the K-laser picture above for more information!

Please visit these AAHA websites for more great information.

www.aahanet.org www.healthypet.com