



DID YOU KNOW?

When pets are dearly loved and valued family members, keeping them healthy is vitally important. Our own knowledge and awareness is often key to our ability to do that. There are numerous issues that we as pet owners should know about because they are common to all pets regardless of species or breed. One such issue is the aging process.

When is my pet a senior? **There is no specific age at which every pet becomes senior because individual pets age at different rates. In general, however, most large- and giant-breed dogs become seniors earlier than small-breed dogs and cats.** This chart provides helpful, easy-to-read insight into the general rate of pet aging.

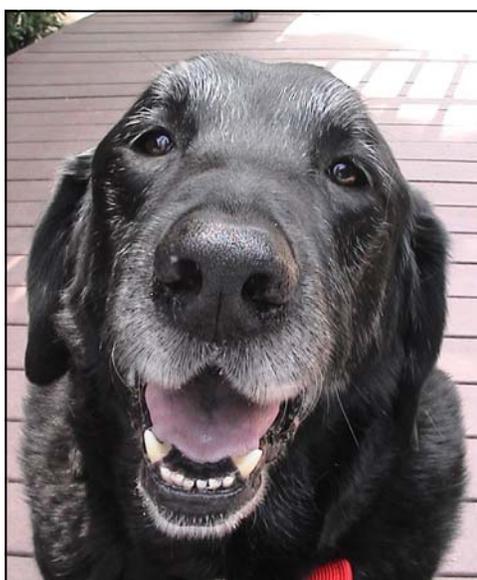


	Cats	Small to Medium Dogs	Large/Giant Breed Dogs	
< 6 Months	Pediatric (Kitten)	Pediatric (Puppy)	Pediatric (Puppy)	
7 Months—1 Year	Young Adult	Young Adult	Young Adult	
1 Year			Mature Adult	Mature Adult
2 Year				
3 Year				
4 Year				
5 Year				
6 Year	Senior	Senior	Senior	
7 Year				
8 Year				
9 Year	Senior	Senior	Geriatric	
10 Year				
11 Year	Geriatric	Geriatric	Geriatric	
12 Year				
13 Year				
14 Year	Geriatric	Geriatric	Geriatric	
15+ Years				

When your own pet is considered “senior”, you may want to follow the guideline that recommends a twice-yearly vet visit even for healthy, senior pets. Wellness visits, a good quality and age-appropriate diet, healthy weight, and regular dental care are great tools for maintaining the health of any pet. But since animals are often good at hiding illness, it is wise to be especially vigilant about catching problems early when pets are older. Senior pets are less able to cope with the impact of a disease or condition in their bodies or with stressful circumstances in their environment. Below are some things to watch for especially in your senior pet.

While more common in senior pets, **these problems should not be ignored as signs that your pet is “just getting old.”** They may indicate a very treatable disease or condition that if ignored, becomes more painful, serious, even life-threatening. An exam by your vet, blood work, x-rays, the right medication, etc. can diagnose and address many issues and offer years of good quality of life for you and your pet. Regardless of the severity of the problem, early intervention can usually save you heartache, your pet suffering and your bank account larger withdrawals!

When you know your pet...their habits, their mannerisms, typical energy level, healthy weight, etc...you will likely recognize when their behavior or appearance tells you that something is wrong. Being a keen observer with a “hands-on” philosophy will not only foster a bond with your pet, it will also help you to protect them. After all, isn’t that our job?



Condition	Signs to Watch For
Arthritis	Stiffness; limping; trouble getting up, jumping or climbing stairs
Cancer	Lumps or bumps, tiredness, loss of appetite, weight loss
Cognitive (Brain) Disorders	Disorientation, vocalization, uncharacteristic “accidents”, change in typical behaviors
Kidney or Liver Disease	Changes in weight, appetite, urination, or water intake
Dental Disease	Loss of appetite, unpleasant mouth odor
Diabetes Mellitus (“sugar” diabetes)	Weight loss, frequent drinking and/or urination, urinary “accidents”
Heart Disease	Difficulty breathing or coughing, weight loss

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