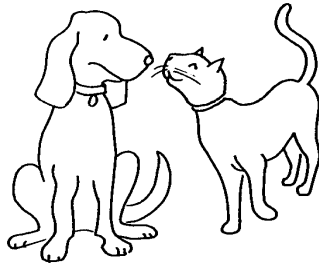


Senior Pets

Is your pet growing old gracefully? As your pet gets older, you will see certain changes developing that are signs of advancing age; graying hair, weight changes, bowel and bladder problems, eye problems, hearing loss, and arthritis are commonly seen. Just like people, as your pet ages, their organs will slowly deteriorate and lose their ability to function. Senior pets are prone to many of the same diseases that older people experience: diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, arthritis, hypertension (high blood pressure) and cancer.

The doctors at Blue Cross Veterinary Hospital believe that senior testing is vital to your aging pet's health. Senior testing helps establish baseline values and identify problems early rather than waiting for obvious signs of illness.

We consider cats over 12 years old and dogs over 10 years old to be seniors. We recommend that we start screening any pet at 7 years old.



DIET – Senior pets have special dietary needs. There are senior foods available that are lower in fat, calories, and protein. We also have diets for specific health problems like kidney disease, heart disease, liver disease, weight loss, and cancer.

BI-ANNUAL EXAMS – As our pets reach their senior years, we recommend twice a year visits instead of annually. Many bodily functions can change during a six-month period considering that one year of their life is about equivalent to seven years or more of our life. As a preventative measure, we can keep your pet more comfortable and extend their life if we can address adverse medical issues sooner rather than later.

LAB WORK – Yearly blood and urine tests starting at seven years of age is recommended to establish a base line and for early detection of disease.

RADIOGRAPHS – Radiographs are another way for us to further evaluate your senior pet's health. Chest x-rays let us look for heart disease, lung disease, and some cancers. Abdominal x-rays let us look at the organs in the abdominal cavity including the liver, kidneys, intestines, and bladder. X-rays also let us look for arthritis.

BLOOD PRESSURE – Certain diseases are associated with high blood pressure (hypertension) including kidney disease, cardiac disease, Cushing's disease, and hyperthyroidism. Hypertension can cause sudden blindness, retinal detachment, and other symptoms. There are medications available to treat high blood pressure. We recommend regular blood pressure checks if your pet has any other health problems.

MEDICATIONS – We have medications available to treat many senior pet health problems. There are medications to help with urinary incontinence, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory for arthritis, and pain medication for chronic conditions including cancer. We also have medication for dogs that are becoming a little senile (old dog cognitive disorder).

If you have questions regarding your senior pet, please ask a staff member or doctor. Remember, there are many things we can do to keep your older friends comfortable. Old age is not a disease.....

