

## September is Senior Pet Health Month:

Advances in Veterinary medicine are helping pets live longer, healthier lives than ever before. But just as humans do, pets may start to have health issues which may include: weight and movement problems, kidney, liver or heart disease, arthritis, tumors or masses, and even diabetes and thyroid disease.

Any pet who is over 7 years of age may be considered a senior, and regular veterinary check ups can help control these conditions before they become problematic.

As pets reach senior age we have several suggestions for evaluating and maintaining their health:

Complete physical examination

Bloodwork; including a complete blood count, blood chemistry levels to check internal organ function and a thyroid check

Stool check for intestinal parasites

Urinalysis to help check bladder and kidney health

Radiographs to help determine if there are any unusual masses in the chest or abdomen, is recommended by the Veterinarian

Getting a baseline of this health information on a pet, as it reaches it's senior years can help detect minor changes later on that may indicate early disease processes and treatment can be started earlier, with a greater chance of success.

Even with regular check ups, problems may occur between visits. Some indications that a pet should be seen by a Veterinarian:

Trouble getting around or lameness

Sudden weight change

Repeated vomiting and/or diarrhea

Sudden and prolonged increases in drinking or urination

Trouble urinating or defecating

Unusual changes in behavior

A bloated or swollen look to the belly

Trouble eating or drinking

Sudden weakness or inability to walk normally

Heavy breathing when resting or frequent bouts of coughing

Dramatic change in sleep patterns

Trouble seeing or hearing

Hair loss or scabs or other skin issues

Changes in activity or amount of exercise