

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SENIOR DOGS**

Dogs older than seven years of age are considered senior. Senior dogs are in the stage of life in which the aging process is affecting every organ. Some organs wear out faster than others, so certain observations are especially important to make. The following is a list of key recommendations that we feel are important for older dogs.

1. Keep vaccinations current. Our veterinarians will determine the proper vaccines and schedule for your senior pet's lifestyle.
2. Brush your pet frequently to prevent mats.
3. Clip toe nails as needed to prevent overgrowth.
4. Keep plenty of fresh water available and monitor its consumption. Increases in water consumption or urination are often associated with conditions such as diabetes, kidney and liver disease.
5. Keep other pets from preventing your senior pet access to food and water.
6. Keep indoors most of the time, especially in inclement weather.
7. Weigh on the same scale and record results at least every 60 days.
8. Present for examination for any of the following:
  - a. Sustained significant increase in water consumption. (Abnormal is intake greater than 100 ml/kg/day or approximately 1 ½ cups (12 ounces)/day for a 10 pound dog)
  - b. Sustained significant increase in urination.
  - c. Weight loss.
  - d. Significant decrease in appetite or failure to eat for more than two consecutive days.
  - e. Significant increase in appetite.
  - f. Repeated vomiting.
  - g. Diarrhea that lasts over 3 days.
  - h. Difficulty in passing stool or urine.

- i. Sudden loss of housetraining.
- j. Lameness that lasts more than 3 days, or lameness in more than one leg.
- k. Noticeable decrease in vision, especially if sudden in onset or pupils that do not constrict in bright light.
- l. Masses, ulcerations (open sores), or multiple scabs on the skin that persist more than 1 week.
- m. Foul mouth odor or drooling that lasts over 2 days.
- n. Increasing size of the abdomen.
- o. Increasing inactivity or amount of time spent sleeping.
- p. Hair loss, especially if accompanied by scratching or if in specific areas (as opposed to generalized).
- q. Persistent coughing or gagging.
- r. Excessive panting.
- s. Sudden collapse or bout of weakness.
- t. Inability to chew dry food.
- u. A seizure (convulsion).