

CLIENT GERIATRIC INFORMATION SHEET

When we talk about senior pets, we are typically referencing dogs and cats around age 7 or older. When pets get to this age, they require special care and attention because they are more likely to develop certain illnesses.

Annual or bi-annual exams should be scheduled because they are necessary for early detection of these problems. The sooner an illness is detected, the more effectively your vet can treat your pet, and prolong their life.

This document serves as an informational piece only and is not intended to replace an exam by a qualified veterinarian.

Here are some common problems pet's face in old-age:



Organ Dysfunction:

Due to the natural aging process, senior pets are more prone to organ dysfunction, including diseases of the heart, liver, kidneys, and thyroid. Advancing dental disease can further increase the risk of organ damage, making annual dental exams and cleanings especially important for senior pets. Senior blood tests should be performed annually to screen for early signs of organ dysfunction. However, not all organs produce detectable blood enzyme changes, so additional diagnostics, such as X-rays and ultrasound, may be needed to identify abnormalities that won't appear on a blood panel. The earlier treatment begins, the better the chances of slowing disease progression and improving your pet's long-term health outcomes.

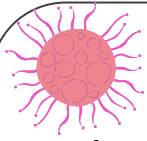


Musculo-Skeletal Disease

Senior pets are more prone to skeletal conditions such as osteoarthritis and intervertebral disc disease. They may also experience muscular weakness and atrophy due to advancing arthritis, limited mobility, and loss of muscle nerve function (innervation).

Annual radiographs of the back, hips, and joints can help identify problem areas early and guide targeted treatment plans.

Treatment options for pets with musculoskeletal disease include **supplements, pain management, injectable medications, laser therapy, and in severe cases surgery**. All of these treatments aim to improve discomfort and quality of life. All treatment options aim to reduce discomfort and improve your pet's quality of life.



Tumors and Cancer

Pets of any age can develop masses (tumors), but senior pets are more likely to form them. Masses may appear on the skin or within internal organs. Often, pet owners are the first to notice skin masses and bring them to a veterinarian's attention. Internal masses can affect any organ and are most reliably detected through ultrasound screening.

Some masses can be completely removed, while others may only be biopsied. Certain types of masses are more likely to be malignant (cancerous), while others are benign (non-cancerous). The only way to determine the nature of a mass is through a biopsy or fine needle aspirate, with confirmation by a histopathologist. Treatment depends on the type of tumor. Some can be cured with surgical removal, while others may require chemotherapy or additional treatments

