

Elburn Animal Hospital Newsletter

July 2019

Welcome

This newsletter we will be discussing senior pets. We will also be giving you some pointers for your pets and July 4th!

If you have any questions or have a topic you would like to hear about please contact our staff at 630-365-9599 or you can contact us via email at 3lburn@sbcglobal.net

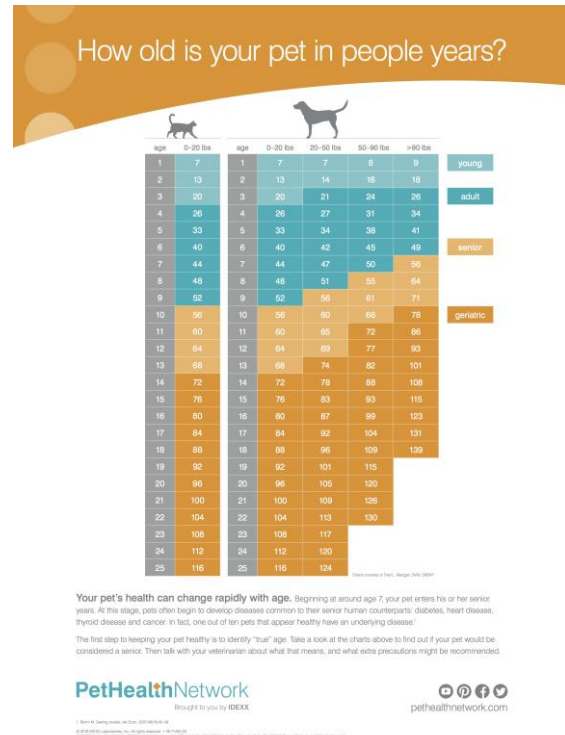
Thanks to better care, pets are living longer now than they ever have before – but as pets get older, they need extra care and attention.

Regular veterinary exams can detect problems in older pets before they become too far advanced or life threatening, and improve the chances of a longer and healthier life for your pet.

When does a pet become old?

It varies, but cats and small dogs are generally considered senior at 7 years of age. Larger breed dogs tend to have a shorter life span compared to smaller breeds and are often considered senior when they are 5 – 6 years old. Contrary to what we have always been told, dogs do not age at the rate of 7 human years for each dog year.

Although senior pets may develop age related problems, good care allows them to live happy, healthy and active lives in their senior years.



What problems are more common in senior pets?

It is easy to spot the outward signs of aging, but it is important to remember a pet's organs are also changing. An older pet is more likely to develop heart, kidney and liver disease, cancer or arthritis. Cancer accounts for almost half of the deaths of pets over the age of 10. Cats have a somewhat lower rate.

It is normal for pets to lose some of their sight and hearing as they age. Older pets may develop cataracts and they may not respond as well to voice commands. If you teach your pet hand signals at a younger age, it may be easier for you to communicate with your pet as his or her hearing worsens with age. Simple

gestures such as: “come” or “stop” can allow you to safely retain control of your pet without the use of words. Pets with poor sight or blindness can get around well in a familiar environment. If your pet’s eyesight is failing, avoid rearranging or adding furniture or other items that could become obstacles.

Changes in activity

If your pet is starting to avoid playing or running or if he or she has trouble with daily activities such as jumping up on a chair or into the car, he or she may have arthritis. A pet with arthritis may also show irritation when touched or petted over the arthritic areas, and may seem depressed or grouchy. There could be other reasons for these changes; you need to have your pet examined by a veterinarian to determine the exact cause of the problems. Simple changes in your home such as orthopedic beds, raised feeding platforms, stairs and ramps may also help your older pet deal with arthritis.

Some common behavior changes in older pets that may be signs of cognitive dysfunction are as follows:

- 1) Easily disturbed by loud noises
- 2) Unusually aggressive behavior
- 3) Increased verbalization
- 4) Anxiety or nervousness
- 5) Confused or disoriented behavior
- 6) Increased wandering
- 7) House soiling
- 8) Changes in sleeping patterns
- 9) Less interested in playing
- 10) Not responding to voice commands
- 11) More grouchy or irritable than normal

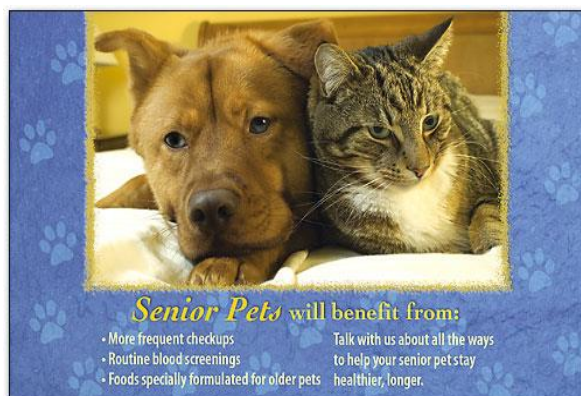
How does weight affect senior pets?

Weight can have a tremendous effect on older pet’s health. Obesity in older pets increases the risk of arthritis, difficulty breathing, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, skin problems, cancer and other conditions.

Sudden weight loss in an older pet is also a source for concern, especially in cats. Hyperthyroidism, diabetes and kidney disease are common causes of weight loss in senior cats. If you notice any sudden changes in your older pets’ weight, contact your veterinarian.

Should new pets be introduced into the home as pet’s age?

You should consult with your veterinarian before adding a new puppy or kitten. Ideally, a new pet should be introduced into your home while your older pet is still active and can move away from the younger animal quickly if he or she needs a time out. Senior pets need to know they have a quiet, secure place where they can walk away and rest, undisturbed and in comfort.



4th of July celebration pointers for your pets!

- **Leave your pets at home** when you go to parties, fireworks displays, parades and other gatherings. So many pets become spooked and run away during this holiday!
- Make sure your pet has I.D. tags on with your current phone number and get your pet's microchipped!
- Consider putting your pets in a **safe, escape-proof room or crate** during parties and fireworks.
- **If you're hosting guests**, ask them to help keep an eye on your pets to make sure they don't escape. Keep your **pets inside** if you or your neighbors are setting off fireworks.
- Keep **sparklers, glow sticks, fireworks, and charcoal and kabob skewers** away from curious pets.
- Don't let pets get near your **barbecue grill** while it is in use or still hot.
- Avoid the urge to feed your pet's **table scraps** or other foods intended for people.
- Remember that too much **sun and heat** (and humidity!) can be dangerous to pets. Keep them inside when it's extremely hot/humid; make sure they have access to shady spots and plenty of water when outdoors; don't leave them outside for extended periods in hot weather.

After the celebrations:

- **Check your yard** for fireworks debris before allowing pets outside to play or relax. Even if you didn't set off fireworks yourself, debris can make its way into your yard, where curious animals may pick it up to play with or eat.
- If you hosted guests, check both your yard and home for **food scraps or other debris** that might be dangerous to pets, such as food skewers.

fireworks = lost pets

Share this photo to help prevent lost pets!
On the 4th of July... keep your pets inside,
and always microchip & tag all your pets.



If you have any questions or comments, please email us at 3lburn@sbcglobal.net or call 630-365-9599! If you have a subject you would like covered in our newsletter please let us know!





We will be closed on Thursday, July 4th. We will reopen on Friday July 5th at 8 a.m.

