



## The Science of Senior Arthritis Care

Just 12 years ago, when the Food and Drug Administration approved the first non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug specifically for canine use, about 20 percent of general practitioners' patients were geriatric. Now it's 25 percent. The NSAID pain-management option was a great recognition of the needs of senior pets, but the research hasn't stopped. Today, veterinarians are using new medication and surgical techniques to improve the quality and lifespan of aging pets.

Research unveiling procedural and medicinal benefits for companion animals has been accomplished largely because canines serve as a medical model for human medicine. One procedure gaining acceptance in the profession is adipose-derived regenerative cell therapy, or fatty stem cell therapy. To date, more than 1,170 veterinarians are using it on canine, feline, and equine patients, most of whom are at an advanced age.

Science has made it possible for pets to live to be geriatric," says Robin Downing, DVM, of Windsor Veterinary Clinic and the Windsor Center for Animal Pain Management in Windsor, Colorado. "It's always been veterinary medicine's desire to advance medical capabilities for animals, but we're accomplished more during my career than I ever imagined possible as a new graduate." Dr. Downing uses the fatty stem cell procedure and expects it to advance over time. The procedure is FDA-approved only for the treatment of osteoarthritis in animals, but she says that someday it might be used to prevent hip dysplasia and other degenerative anomalies such as liver, kidney or cardiac diseases.

"This procedure provides a non-invasive option for animals that otherwise would need hip or joint replacement, which is more costly and requires physical therapy to recover," Downing says. "Fat is harvested from the patient's body and processed through Vet-Stem (of San Diego). The company prepares the cells for IV and joint injection. These cells regenerate tissue."

She says fatty stem cell therapy, which is performed on animals that have few other options, is nothing short of a miracle. Clients pay about \$3,000, compared to the average hip-replacement cost of \$5,000. "The ever-increasing human-animal bond has spurred manufacturers to recognize that senior care is a lifestyle and veterinarians need to do more than just deal with pain," Downing says. "This procedure is one more option in veterinarians' toolbox."

In other osteoarthritis advances, an implant, the bioscaffold, has been developed for canine patients. The device is implanted in or near diseased tissue and provides a structural matrix for local repair cells such as stem cells to attach and heal tissue. The device has been evaluated in a clinical trial and will profoundly change the management of osteoarthritis. Most research is heading in the direction of repairing, rather than simply masking the problem.

NSAID pain management is a great advancement for the health of the senior pet, but much more is already available. Supplements and acupuncture are recommended by Campus Veterinary clinic for arthritic animals. Ask your veterinarian for more information about these treatments.

## **July 4th - Albany Dog Jog. Winner received an iPod touch from CVC!**



## **Seven Senior Pet Care Tips for Your Seven Year old Pet**

Just as humans need more medical attention as they age, pets, who become seniors around age seven, benefit from additional checkups from their veterinarian. Providing that special care is fundamental to improving their quality of life. Here are seven tips to help give your beloved senior pets a better quality of life in their golden years.

1. Taking your senior pet to the veterinarian for a checkup at least every six months is an important aspect if effectively monitoring changes in his or her health. Part of frequent vet checkups is building a strong partnership with your veterinarian.
2. During your senior pet's regular checkups, your veterinarian may suggest running basic blood and urine tests prior to procedures requiring anesthetic to help determine the presence of existing diseases. Regular blood and urine testing can help identify diseases in their earliest and most treatable stages.
3. Look, listen and feel for bumps, signs of pain, or behavioral changes. Any physical or behavioral changes in your senior pet could be significant. Disorientation, changes in sleep or loss of housetraining could be indications of a health problem. Weight fluctuation, increase in thirst and/or urination, or any change in your pet's normal behavior could also be a sign of a health problem.
4. As pets get older, their nutritional needs change. Immune and digestive systems can become more delicate. Pets can lose muscle mass, and gaining weight is common due to reduced activity levels. Switching to a senior pet food may help promote a long, healthy life and provide enhanced levels of nutrients such as antioxidants, vitamin E and beta-carotene, plus fatty acids that are important to skin and coat health.
5. The health of your animals' gums and teeth can be indications of health—dental or otherwise. Periodontal disease can be painful and cause other serious complications, including respiratory infections, liver disorders, kidney infection, inflammation of the heart and brain damage.
6. Maintaining a familiar routine with your animal is an easy way to minimize stress in his or her life. In your pet's younger years, exercise is a key part of this routine and should not be forgotten as your pet grows older. Providing moderate exercise will help with weight control and keep muscles toned. If you notice that your pet tires easily or has trouble breathing while walking, be sure to bring that to the attention of your veterinarian.
7. Last and definitely not least is to continue giving your pet the love and attention you have always provided. From puppy and kitten stages to their golden years, animals—like humans—may need a little more attention during both these stages of life. Love and affection, combined with regular veterinary checkups, can help you keep your furry companion content in the later years of life.

## **SLENTROL: A New Drug for Overweight Management in Dogs**

Canine obesity is a serious problem. Diet and exercise is an important first step, but the addition of a new, FDA-approved weigh-loss medication called Slentrol can help your dog to achieve a healthy weight.

Less weight can lead to a better quality of life for your dog. Because of the strain added weight puts on joints, bones, and muscles, excess weight can hurt your dog in ways you can't always see, including breathing problems, high blood pressure, arthritis, skin and haircoat problems, and reduced activity.

Slentrol reduces appetite, so dogs eat less and lose weight. Special food is not needed—any nutritionally balanced diet will do. About 90% of weight loss of a dog on Slentrol comes from eating less due to a smaller appetite; the other 10% of weight loss comes from less fat being absorbed. It helps dogs lose weight at a steady rate that's just right for their individual weight and size.

Ask your vet if Slentrol is an option for your overweight dog.



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IT'S NOT JUST YOUR DOG'S WEIGHT.  
IT'S YOUR DOG'S HEALTH.

## The Special Needs of the Senior Cat

Just as people are living longer than they did in the past, cats are living longer too. In fact, the percentage of cats over six years of age has nearly doubled in just over a decade. There is every reason to expect that the “graying” cat population will continue to grow.

### **So how old is my cat, really?**

Cats are individuals and, like people, they experience advancing years in their own unique ways. Many cats begin to encounter age-related physical changes between seven and ten years of age, and most do so by the time they are 12. The commonly held belief that every “cat year” is worth seven “human years” is not entirely accurate. In reality, a one-year-old cat is physiologically similar to a 16-year-old human, and a two-year-old cat is like a person of 21. For every year thereafter, each cat year is worth about four human years. Using this formula, a ten-year-old cat is similar age wise to a 53-year old person, a 12-year-old cat to a 61-year-old person, and a 15-year-old cat to a person of 73.

### **Advancing age is not a disease.**

Aging is a natural process. Although many complex physical changes accompany advancing years, age in and of itself is not a disease. Even though many conditions that affect older cats are not correctable, they can often be controlled. The key to making sure your senior cat has the healthiest and highest quality of life possible is to recognize and reduce factors that may be health risks, detect disease as early as possible, correct or delay the progression of disease, and improve or maintain the health of the body’s systems.

### **What happens as my cat ages?**

The aging process is accompanied by many physical and behavioral changes:

- The immune system of older cats is less able to fend off foreign invaders. Chronic diseases often associated with aging can impair immune function even further.
- Dehydration, a consequence of many diseases, further diminishes blood circulation and immunity.
- Older cats groom themselves less effectively than do younger cats, sometimes resulting in hair matting, skin odor, and inflammation.
- The claws of aging felines are often overgrown, thick, and brittle.
- In humans, aging changes in the brain contribute to a loss of memory and alterations in personality commonly referred to as senility. Similar symptoms are seen in elderly cats: wandering, excessive meowing, apparent disorientation, and avoidance of social interaction.
- For various reasons, hearing loss is common in cats of advanced age.
- Aging is also accompanied by many changes in the eyes. A slight haziness of the lens and a lacy appearance to the iris (the colored part of the eye) are both common age-related changes, but neither seems to decrease a cat’s vision to any appreciable extent. However, several diseases— especially those associated with high blood pressure— can seriously and irreversibly impair a cat’s ability to see.
- Dental disease is extremely common in older cats and can hinder eating and cause significant pain.
- Feline kidneys undergo a number of age-related changes that may ultimately lead to impaired function; kidney failure is a common disease in older cats, and its symptoms are extremely varied.
- Arthritis is common in older cats. Although most arthritic cats don’t become overtly lame, they may have difficulty gaining access to litter boxes and food and water dishes, particularly if they have to jump or climb stairs to get to them.
- Hyperthyroidism (often resulting in overactivity); hypertension (high blood pressure, usually a result of either kidney failure or hyperthyroidism), diabetes mellitus; inflammatory bowel disease; and cancer are all examples of conditions that, though sometimes seen in younger cats, become more prevalent in cats as they age.

### **How can my veterinarian help?**

Just as your observations can help detect disease in the early stages, so too can regular veterinary examinations. We recommend evaluating your pet’s health every six months instead of once a year. At least once a year, blood tests and urine analysis will be suggested, as well as other diagnostics as needed. Ask about our senior wellness packages for discounts on these tests for the health of your senior pet.

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Monday Thru Friday

7:20 am to 6:00 pm

Saturday

7:20 am to 3:00 pm

Sunday

Closed



**\$5 off coupon inside!**