DEARBORN FAMILY PET CARE

SENIOR PET SPECIAL ISSUE

THE PAW STREET JOURNAL

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AAHA ACCREDITED

From all of us at Dearborn Family Pet Care

A Note from Bull

Hello Fans! This issue is dedicated to all pets reachin' their, uh-hmm, GOLDEN Years! Not just GOLDEN Retrievers, OK?

Our Senior Wellness Plan

Dearborn Family Pet Care recommends that a physical examination for all older pets be performed semiannually. In general, your pet is considered to be entering those "golden years" at age seven for dogs and age ten for cats. Many factors affect our pet's life expectancy.

While some of these factors are not in our control, such as genetics, we can impact our pet's potential longevity with regular exercise, diet and proactive wellness care.

Your visit with us twice yearly gives us the opportunity to discuss these items and to perform a thorough physical exam on your companion.

A specific senior wellness blood profile may be recommended to evaluate organ health, hormone levels and to monitor for metabolic changes over time.

The Golden Pets

It's a common belief that dogs age about seven years for each human year.

And that's pretty accurate, depending on his weight. But there's another reason to consider this number as special: it's typically when your dog – and cat, too – enters his golden years and needs special attention from his family.

As your furry friend reaches "Senior Petizen" status at the dawn of his golden years, he may already be demonstrating changes in behavior, ability or appearance.

Growing older can have similar changes for pets as for humans. You may notice your pet's eyesight, hearing or ability to recognize family members deteriorating. Your pet may move more slowly or seem stiff and sore at times.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

Pet Parents and veterinarians can work together to provide for their special needs. Extra care and preventive measures can make a great difference in their quality of life. While some signs of aging are unavoidable, let your vet know if your pet has any of these symptoms:

- **Drinking, urinating or scratching more often?**
- **Having difficulty climbing or jumping?**
- **Have you noticed new lumps or bumps, bad breath or swollen gums?**
- **Changes in eating, sleeping or social habits?**

Keep "Senior Petizen" on a Wellness Plan

New technologies and procedures make it possible for pets to live longer and healthier lives. Older pets need protection against infection and contagious diseases, so annual vaccinations and routine testing for heartworm and intestinal parasites are crucial. Most vets also recommend blood screening for geriatric pets once or twice yearly. Blood testing indicates how well major organs are functioning, can give early warning of infection and many diseases, and establishes baseline values for comparison with future test results.

Dental Checkups a Must

More than 85 percent of senior dogs and cats have serious dental problems, including gingivitis and periodontal disease. If left untreated, these diseases can affect the heart, liver and kidneys.

Periodontal disease is a progressive and painful infection of the tissue surrounding the teeth. It starts out as a bacterial film called plaque. When the bacteria die, they can be calcified by calcium in saliva. This forms a hard, rough substance called tartar or calculus, which allows more plaque to accumulate.

It's generally recommended that you have your pet's teeth checked once or twice a year, depending on his age, breed, diet and lifestyle.

The Great OutDoors

MAKE YOUR YARD A DRUG-FREE ZONE

THE WHOLE EARTH LAWN

Pesticides, whether insecticides, fungicides or herbicides, are not selective in what they kill - and they do it quite efficiently.

Your intent, of course, is to kill what's on the ground – weeds, bugs and other parasites. Unintentionally, by making your lawn a virtual drug addict, you may injure your pet as well. Pets are so vulnerable because they are near to the ground, they can't read warning signs and they perceive pesticides in pellet form as food.

There are steps you can take to return your lawn to its natural state without endangering your pets. Here are a few tips to get your lawn off drugs.

AERATING

You don't want compacted soil, so aerate it in the spring to encourage the exchange of oxygen, moisture and plant nutrients. Ants and earthworms will fertilize the soil and continue the aeration process.

TOPDRESSING

Add nutrients and microorganisms to your lawn with applications of compost, topsoil and/or composted manure.

OVERSEEDING

Spread a layer of grass seed over the existing lawn to improve grass density. Use hardy, pest-resistant grass species.

MOWING

Never cut off more than the top third of each grass blade in a single mowing. Mow to a height of three inches, using sharp blades. This leads to good root development and denser turf, which shades out the weeds.

WATERING

Water is essential for all living things. Watering frequency is dependent on many factors, including temperature, humidity, shade, slope, and type of grass and soil.

FERTILIZING

Use compost, grass clippings and slow-release organic products. Natural botanical pesticides do not necessarily mean less toxicity.

And finally, consider alternatives to 100-percent grass. Check out other possible ground covers and vegetation. Grow thyme or other herbs. Build an oriental rock garden. Plant wildflowers that attract birds and butterflies.

Then, share your enthusiasm for a drug-free lawn with your neighbors.

The Senior Pet Home Exam

AND SOME NEW TRICKS FOR OUR OLD FRIENDS

One way to maximize the good times and minimize the bad is to give your senior pet a weekly home physical exam.

Your first priority is to establish a "norm" for every inch and working part of his body. Once you determine what's normal for your individual pet, you can later detect any abnormalities that need professional attention. For example, a healthy pet will have a healthy coat, with an agreeable scent and no patchy areas indicating hair loss. When inspecting the ears, a foul odor is usually an indication of infection.

Check his eyes, ears, nose, mouth and trachea (wind pipe). Ask your veterinarian to instruct you how to correctly examine his salivary glands and external lymph nodes. Look for sores, growths, and any change in color, size or shape.

Examine the abdomen for tenderness or distention. Feel for lumps in the mammary glands (both sexes). Note any swelling, odor or discharge in the genital and rectal areas.

Observe your pet from different angles as he walks and runs. Move his joints and note any pain or restricted use. Look for split, broken or ingrown nails. Become acquainted with the normal rate and rhythm of his breathing and watch for any changes.

Do this on a weekly basis and you'll have many more happy and healthy dog years to share.

Dogs and cats that are "getting on" still need to get out and keep moving, and get mental stimulation too.

Try taking your cat's favorite toys away for a few days and then "gifting" her with them. They may seem brand new and rekindle some of that waning energy. Teach her a simple new thing to do –shaking hands or standing up on cue – and heap on the praise. Turn on a TV show about animals and your pet may react as much as people do.

Aging dogs can still be great fun, and can be of great service as well. Exercise them up to their limits. Try putting obedience moves to music—ballroom dancing is recommended over hard rock, by the way. Therapy visits to a hospital or nursing home help senior citizens and senior pets in many wonderful ways.

DEARBORN FAMILY PET CARE

WE'RE NOT PEOPLE DOCTORS BUT WE KNOW A HAPPY HUMAN WHEN WE SEE ONE

We all know that the human-animal bond is a two-way street. The love and care you give your pet are returned in a variety of ways, from purring in your lap to protecting your family from strangers.

Recent national and international studies now indicate even greater health benefits to pet owners, and we at **Dearborn Family Pet Care** are not surprised at all. We may not be people doctors but we know a happy human when we see one.

The faithful companionship that pets provide can produce greater psychological stability. This, in turn, may actually reduce the risk of heart disease.

People with hypertension who adopt a pet typically have lower blood pressure readings in stressful situations.

Even walking with your pet can bring about an almost instant reduction in frayed nerves.

Seniors, in particular, benefit from pet ownership. Depression and loneliness are decreased, while a sense of security and even a renewed interest in "getting out again" are heightened.

Pet owners, according to these studies, make fewer medical visits, lowering their health care costs.

Of course, a healthy and happy pet is more likely to offer all the advantages we've discussed here. We look forward to providing for your pet and doing our part to make your life a little easier in the balance.

Be Kind to Animals Week® is 101

It's the longest-running, most successful humane education campaign in America, and has been supported by several U.S. presidents, celebrities from Shirley Temple to John Wayne, Eleanor Roosevelt to Betty White, and even Dennis the Menace and Porky Pig.

All of us can celebrate the role animals play in our lives, and encourage others, especially children, to do the same. Starting with some important tips:

- **Feed them nutritious, high-quality diet, including constant, fresh, clean water.**
- **Train pets patiently, and give them lots of love, attention and exercise. Enroll new pets in a behavioral training class.**
- **Give them proper veterinary care; keep up with vaccinations and heartworm prevention.**
- **Groom often to keep their coats healthy.**
- **Have realistic expectations. Make a commitment to work through any behavior or health problems.**
- **Make sure they have a collar and ID tag or Microchip ID.**

KNOW THE SIGNS OF THESE COMMON SENIOR DISEASES

HEALTH CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF COMMON SENIOR DISEASES	SIGNS	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES IF LEFT UNTREATED
DENTAL	Gingivitis, Periodontal Disease	Swollen or red gums, bad breath	Heart, Kidney and Liver Diseases, Systemic Infection, Cancer
LIVER	Liver Diseases	Weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, increased urination or thirst, decreased appetite	Liver Failure, Anemia, Bleeding Disorders
KIDNEY	Kidney Failure, Kidney Stones, Kidney Infection	Weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, back pain, increased urination or thirst, decreased appetite	Kidney Failure, Heart Disease, Death
HEART & LUNGS	Cardiac Disease, Emphysema	Coughing, weight loss, difficulty breathing	Respiratory/Cardiac Failure
JOINTS	Arthritis, Back Disease, Hip Dysplasia	Decreased appetite, lameness, refusing to exercise, pain	Reduced Mobility and Neurological Function
ENDOCRINE	Hyperthyroidism, Hypothyroidism, Diabetes Mellitus	Increased appetite without weight gain, frequent urination, vomiting, increased water consumption	Heart or Kidney Failure, Secondary Metabolic Disease
CANCER	Skin Cancer, Liver or Spleen Cancer	Bleeding, lumps, vomiting, diarrhea, irritated skin, swollen lymph nodes	Organ Failure and Death
OCULAR	Glaucoma, Cataracts	Rubbing eyes, pressing head against objects, gray or bluish hue in eye	Blindness, Loss of Eye
GASTRO-INTESTINAL SYSTEM	Cancer, Colitis, Pancreatitis, Inflammatory Bowel Disease	Vomiting, diarrhea, fluid gain, weight loss	Diseases that may lead to death

PREVENTING HEARTWORM DISEASE

Mosquitos carry the parasite that causes heartworm disease

This often-fatal infection can damage the liver, kidneys and lungs, and lead to heart failure. We have several preventive treatments that are safe, effective and easy to use. Prescription heartworm medicine will also protect your pet from other parasites such as roundworms, hookworms, fleas, and ticks.

BE PROACTIVE

Talk to your veterinarian about which prevention treatment is best.

BE AWARE

Over-the-counter products aren't effective, and can be harmful to your pet.

BE VIGILANT

Protect your pet – it'll do his and your heart good.

Dearborn Family Pet Care

AAHA Accredited

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Hours

Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. 8am–6pm
Thur. 9am–6pm
Sat. 8am–1pm
Sun. Closed

Dr. Cheryl D. Good
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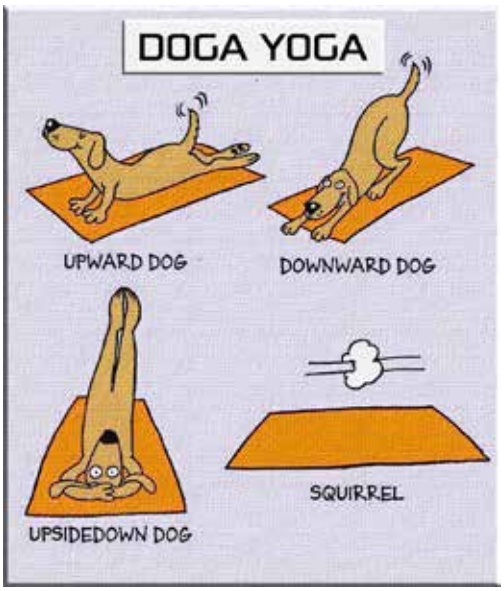

YOUNG OR OLD

The Top 10 Reasons to Get Your Pet to the Vet

1. **Trauma from a fall,** or a heavy blow from a collision. Even if your pet is conscious and walking around after trauma.
2. **Bleeding that is profuse**, from a cut, puncture or orifice that can't be stopped by applying pressure needs immediate attention.
3. **Abdomen is hard or bloated.** Seek care immediately. Your pet could be suffering a very dangerous gastric condition.
4. **Inability or straining to urinate** can mean that your pet has a full or partial urinary blockage, which needs immediate attention.
5. **Uncontrolled vomiting** or refusal to eat and drink for more than 36 hours. Your pet can become seriously dehydrated if he can't keep down food or refuses both food and water.
6. **Ingestion of poison**, such as insecticide, medications or anti-freeze. Contact a veterinarian immediately. Bring a sample of the poison, or its packaging.
7. **Seizures** that last more than a few minutes or occur one after the other with little time in between. Lengthy and repeated seizures demand immediate attention.
8. **Any burn or electric shock**. Almost all burns require immediate attention and are very painful. Be aware that pets often chew electrical cords and can suffer complications from electrocution.
9. **Sudden swelling** of the face, head or neck should be checked right away. Also, any injury or trauma to the eyes is an emergency that requires immediate care.
10. **Sudden disorientation**, sudden lameness, or an inability to rise and stand or walk without falling over, are all potential emergencies.

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