



In this month's issue



1 AGEING PETS – Wellness Checks

Regular veterinary examinations are important for overall health at any age. Annual examinations are the norm, but more frequent exams may be needed, based on your pet's health.

2 INCONTINENCE IN DOGS

Urinary incontinence occurs when a housetrained dog loses control of his or her bladder. This can range in severity from occasional small urine leaks to inadvertent voiding of a large amount of urine.

3 CARING FOR YOUR SENIOR CAT

Cats tend to age more gracefully than dogs, but they still age. Eventually, they can't jump to the top of the refrigerator any more. Their appetites wane. They sleep more. What else can you expect as your cat ages?

4 DOG TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR TIPS

The dog park is a great place to observe dog body language in action.

Ageing pets: recognise the signs of potential health issues.

As a dog ages, signs of potentially serious health problems are commonly overlooked by pet owners as "normal for an old dog." Some changes are to be expected with old age, some are not. Learn to watch for, and differentiate between, normal and possible medical problems for your senior dog. It is much better to err on the side of caution and have anything new or unusual in your dog checked out as soon as possible by your veterinarian.

Your pet may still behave like a puppy or kitten and look like a youngster, but after their 7th birthday* cats and dogs enter their senior years, the equivalent in human terms of entering your 50's.

After the age of 7 years, the nutritional and physical needs of pets change, and the feeding and exercise routines you've been using may no longer be appropriate. As cats and dogs get older, they are at increased risk for certain age-related disorders, and should receive more frequent veterinary check-ups.

If your pet is over 7, or over 5 for large and giant dog breeds, you

should be aware of potential physical and mental changes associated with this stage of life. The good news is that the earlier these age-related diseases are detected, the better the chances of you and your vet managing them successfully.

* 5 years for large and giant breed dogs – (dogs over 25kg) and kittens as well as adult dogs and cats.

Diseases that become more common as dogs age:

Cancer, Heart Disease, Kidney Disease, Dementia, Diabetes, Osteoarthritis, Dental Disease, Skin Disease, Obesity

Signs to look out for include:

- Weight gain or weight loss
- Increased drinking and/or urinating
- Reduced activity and lower exercise tolerance
- Reduced appetite
- Reduced sense of smell, hearing loss, poor vision
- Decreased playfulness and decreased agility
- Difficulty chewing
- Poor digestion and digestive upsets
- Brittle nails, poor coat
- Loose skin/loss of muscle mass





- Behavioural changes, including less human interaction, confusion and disorientation, loss of toilet training and disrupted sleep/wake patterns

Diseases that become more common as cats age:

Cancer, Heart Disease, Kidney Disease, Diabetes, Arthritis, Urinary Disease, Dental Disease, Behavioural and Neurological Diseases, Skin Disease

Signs to look out for include:

- Weight gain or loss
- Decreased appetite
- Reduced activity and exercise
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination and/or accidents outside the litter tray
- Decreased agility
- Poor digestion and digestive upsets
- Poor grooming
- Loose skin/loss of muscle mass
- Behavioural changes: irritability, less human interaction, confusion and decreased playfulness

Source:

<http://www.hillspet.com.au/en-au/seniors/signs-of-an-ageing-pet.html>

<http://vetmedicine.about.com/od/doghealthfaqs/a/SeniorDogsVet.htm>

Incontinence in Dogs

Most commonly seen in sterilized females, urinary incontinence occurs when a housetrained dog loses control of their bladder. This can range in severity from occasional small urine leaks to inadvertent voiding of a large amount of urine.

What Causes Urinary Incontinence in Dogs?

- Hormonal imbalance
- Weak bladder sphincter
- Urinary tract infection
- Urinary stones
- Spinal injury or degeneration (frequently seen in German shepherds)
- Protruding intervertebral disc
- Prostate disorders
- Presence of other diseases that cause excessive water consumption, such as diabetes, kidney disease, hyperadrenocorticism
- Congenital abnormalities
- Anatomic disorders
- Certain medications

What Are the General Symptoms of Urinary Incontinence in Dogs?

Dripping urine, which can irritate the skin and cause redness, is one of the most recognizable symptoms of incontinence, as is excessive licking of the vulva or penis area. Pet parents may also notice the area where the dog sleeps is contaminated with urine.



What Should I Do If I Think My Dog Is Incontinent?

Consult with a veterinarian, who will confirm the diagnosis and try to determine a cause. The vet will take a thorough history, perform a physical exam and likely conduct a urinalysis to verify whether your dog is suffering from a bladder infection, which requires treatment with antibiotics. Other tests may include a urine culture, blood work, radiographs and ultrasound.

What Are Some Complications of Urinary Incontinence in Dogs?

Some bouts of urinary incontinence ebb and wane, but others can progress and cause more serious bladder and kidney infections. A skin infection may result in areas that are in constant contact with urine.

Are Certain Dogs Prone to Urinary Incontinence?

Although urinary incontinence can afflict dogs of any age, breed or gender, it is most often seen in middle-aged to older spayed females; cocker spaniels, springer spaniels, Doberman pinschers and Old English sheepdogs are among the breeds often prone to incontinence.

How Is Urinary Incontinence Treated?

Treatment for incontinence will depend on its underlying cause. Medications can often effectively manage this condition and prevent everyday accidents. Some





treatments focus on hormone therapy, while others, such as phenylpropanolamine, strengthen the urethral sphincter, which controls urine flow. Surgery also may be an option if medication alone doesn't work. Collagen injections, a newer therapy for incontinence, appear to have promising results.

In cases of incontinence due to bladder stones, a protruding disc or congenital abnormality, surgery may be recommended.

Source: <http://pets.webmd.com/dogs/urinary-incontinence-dogs>

Caring for your senior cat

Today, our cats are living longer than ever before, many times into their late teens and sometimes even into their 20s. However, with this shift toward older cats, we're also seeing age-related conditions that were less common previously.



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.

Is my cat sick, or is it just old age?

Owners of older cats often notice changes in their cat's behavior, but consider these changes an inevitable and untreatable result of aging, and fail to report them to their veterinarian. Failure to use the litter box, changes in activity levels, and alterations in eating, drinking, or sleeping habits are examples. While veterinarians believe that some behavior problems are due to the diminishing mental abilities of aging cats, it is a mistake to automatically attribute all such changes to old age. In fact, the possibility of some underlying medical condition should always be the first consideration. Disease of virtually any organ system, or any condition that causes pain or impairs mobility can contribute to changes in behavior. For example:

- A fearful cat may not become aggressive until it is in pain (e.g., from dental disease) or less mobile (e.g., from arthritis).
- The increased urine production that often results from diseases common to aging cats (e.g., kidney failure, diabetes mellitus, or hyperthyroidism) may cause the litter box to become soiled more quickly than expected. The increased soil and odor may cause cats to find a bathroom more to their liking.
- Many cats that do not mark their territory with urine, even if exposed to intruding cats, may begin to do so if a condition like hyperthyroidism develops.
- Cats with painful arthritis may have difficulty gaining access to a litter box, especially if negotiating stairs is required. Even climbing into the box may be painful for such cats; urinating or defecating in an inappropriate location is the natural result.
- Older cats may be more sensitive to changes in the household since their ability to adapt to unfamiliar situations diminishes with age.

Never assume that changes you see in your older cat are simply due to old age, and therefore untreatable. Any alteration in your cat's behavior or physical condition should alert you to contact your veterinarian.





How can I help keep my senior cat healthy?

Close observation is one of the most important tools you have to help keep your senior cat healthy. You may wish to perform a mini-physical examination on a weekly basis. Ask your veterinarian to show you how to do it and what to look for. You will find it easier if you just make the examination an extension of the way you normally interact with your cat. For example, while you are rubbing your cat's head or scratching its chin, gently raise the upper lips with your thumb or forefinger so you can examine the teeth and gums. In the same way, you can lift the ear flaps and examine the ear canals. While you are stroking your cat's fur, you can check for abnormal lumps or bumps, and evaluate the health of the skin and coat.

- Daily brushing or combing to remove loose hairs and preventing them from being swallowed and forming hair balls.
- Nails should be checked weekly and trimmed if necessary.
- Proper nutrition is important as many cats tend towards obesity as they age.
- Exercise is also important, not only for weight control but overall health.
- Reducing environmental stress whenever possible is very important since older cats are usually less adaptable to change.

Cats are experts at hiding illness, and elderly cats are no exception. It is common for a cat to have a serious medical problem, yet not show any sign of it until the condition is quite advanced. Since most diseases can be managed more successfully when detected and treated early in their course, it is important for owners of senior cats to carefully monitor their behavior and health.

How can my veterinarian help?

Just as your observations can help detect disease in the early stages, so too can regular veterinary examinations. Your veterinarian may suggest evaluating your healthy senior cat more frequently than a younger cat—for example, every six months instead of once a year. If your cat has a medical condition, more frequent evaluations may be necessary. During your cat's examination, the veterinarian will gather a complete medical and behavioral history, perform a thorough physical examination in order to evaluate every organ system, check your cat's weight and body condition, and compare them to previous

evaluations. At least once a year, certain tests—including blood tests, fecal examination, and urine analysis—will be suggested. In this way, disorders can be found and treated early, and ongoing medical conditions can be appraised. Both are necessary to keep your senior cat in the best possible health for the longest possible time.

Source:

http://www.vet.cornell.edu/FHC/health_resources/SeniorCats.cfm

Dog Training Tips

by Sonya Bevan “Dog Charming”

The dog park is a great place to observe dog body language in action. Even during appropriate play, it's always good to keep an eye on the dogs involved and be ready to interrupt any play that is getting a bit too rough or going on for a bit too long. If the dogs aren't taking frequent pauses, you should step in to provide a break. Be the adjudicator! Just like children playing, the high arousal levels during play can very quickly tip over into aggression if participants accidentally play a bit too hard resulting in a player getting hurt.

I don't agree with the common adage “let the dogs work it out amongst themselves”. If signs are present that two dogs are not too sure of each other and there are some precursor signals to aggression, it's better to separate or distract them early and prevent an altercation. Letting dogs work it out is stressful for them and can lead to injury.

Here's what to look for during your doggie park adventures:

<https://apdt.com/pet-owners/dog-park/>

Sonya can be contacted on:

Phone: 0419 905 466

Email: info@dogcharming.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DogCharming>

Website: <http://www.dogcharming.com.au>

Sherwood Boarding Kennels
Nambeelup

Pete & Gerri Scott
19 D'Rayne Glade, Nambeelup
[off Lakes Rd] Mandurah

NOW TAKING BOOKINGS - Ph: 9583 4444
Email: sherwoodboarding@hotmail.com

