

Aging or Illness? Signs of Age-Related Disease in Senior Dogs



While some signs of aging, such as a graying muzzle and slowed activity, are easy to identify in your dog, others are more subtle. Most age-related changes in how your dog looks, acts, and feels tend to be gradual. Therefore, it takes a watchful eye to recognize what may be early signs of disease or health problems, and routine examinations become more important than ever.

Do you know the signs of pain and illness in your dog? Following is a list of the most common changes associated with age-related diseases and compromising medical conditions. If you note any of these changes in your dog, please let us know. By working together, we can help ensure your pet enjoys the best quality of life possible through out the senior years.

Behavioral Changes

- Decreased activity
- Less interaction with family members
- Less enthusiastic greeting behavior
- Sleeping more or sleeping during the day and staying awake at night
- Disorientation/confusion (getting “lost” in the house or yard)
- Less responsive to verbal cues or name
- Excessive barking or whimpering for no apparent reason

Metabolic Changes

- Weight gain (or loss)
- Changes in appearance (skin, coat, or muscle tone)
- Changes in eating or drinking habits
- Increased urination
- Loss of housetraining



Physical Changes

- Limping/stiffness of gait
- Poor vision or difficulty hearing
- Dental problems (offensive breath)
- Increase in infections
- Digestive problems, such as increased episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
- New lumps or bumps

Changes in your dog’s appearance or behavior can be a sign that something is *medically* wrong, so don’t assume your pet is just suffering from “old age” and can’t be helped. Keep a close eye on your senior dog, and talk with us about any type of change, whether it occurs suddenly or gradually.



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