

PEPE'S PERSPECTIVE

South Anderson Veterinary Clinic

www.southandersonvet.com/pepesperspectives.html

Senior Wellness:

By Dr. Crabtree and Megan Estes

Did you know that our pets are considered to be seniors around the age of 11 (and as young as 6-7 years for large and giant breed dogs)? Did you know that 1 in 5 senior pets have disease that is not showing clinical signs yet?? Or, that many of these diseases are able to be diagnosed and treated/managed by your veterinarian? As your pet approaches their senior years, your veterinarian may recommend various diagnostics and treatments to turn their senior years into their best years. Here is a brief discussion of some of the more common issues and diseases that our senior sweethearts deal with.

-Teeth: Bacteria found in heavy tartar and plaque on pet's teeth can be taken into their bloodstream and land at places like the heart or kidneys and cause much more serious diseases that can be prevented by regular, routine dental cleanings. Does your pet have bad breath, or have they been losing teeth lately? Have your veterinarian check for dental disease.

-Eyes: Our pets go through some regular aging changes of the eyes such as hardening of the lens (not much of an issue), but this can sometimes look like, and be confused with, cataracts which can cause partial or complete blindness and other issues within the eyes. Many of our senior pets experience dry eye, which often presents as green discharge from one or both eyes, and corneal ulcers. Have you noticed what seems like visual impairment in your pet, or difficulty navigating in bright/dim light?

-Skin: Many of our senior pets have lumps and bumps that we've learned to tolerate, but how serious are they really? Many of these lumps and bumps are abnormal accumulations of fat,

or simple cysts, which can be left alone for the most part, but often your veterinarian can help you decipher which bumps need special attention with a needle sample and cytology to determine which ones should be removed or further investigated. Monitor your pet's lumps and bumps for changes in size, color, pain, oozing, etc.

-Blood: Many of our senior pets have chronic diseases that are easily, or only, detectable through routine blood work. Routine blood work is able to give your veterinarian a picture of what is going on *inside* your pet, including checking for evidence of anemia, infections, inflammation, liver and kidney values, and electrolytes. Talk to your veterinarian today about routine blood work for your senior pet.



Remember, age is NOT a disease! Sure, some body parts slow down, or begin to have aches and pains, but with appropriate veterinary care and treatment, your pet can live their golden years without a care in the world!! Talk to your veterinarian today to schedule a wellness examination for your senior pet, and be sure to ask about routine blood work!

Thanks for reading!

Dr. Crabtree and Megan