

## Is Your Dog or Cat a Senior?

Just like people, aging dogs and cats need special care and attention. In general, most dogs and cats are considered “senior” starting at the age of 7 or 8 years old. Most cats become seniors later than dogs. Certain dog breeds and larger dogs may age even faster. The Aging Chart below will give you an idea of your pet’s relative age in “human years.” A discussion with your veterinarian is the best way to determine how old your pet really is and how well they are aging.

What is Relative Age of Your Dog or Cat in "Human Years"?

Dog's Age	Human Years (Dog's Size in pounds)				Cat's Age	Human Years
	0-20	21-50	51-90	>90		
5	36	37	40	42	5	33
6	40	42	45	49	6	37
7	44	47	50	56	7	41
8	48	51	55	64	8	45
9	52	56	61	71	9	49
10	56	60	66	78	10	53
11	60	65	72	86	11	57
12	64	69	77	93	12	61
13	68	74	82	101	13	65
14	72	78	88	108	14	69
15	76	83	93	115	15	73
16	80	87	99	123	16	77
17	84	92	104		17	81
18	88	96	109	Senior =	18	85
19	92	101	115	Geriatric =	19	89
20	96	105	120		20	93

As pets age, their organs may become less efficient and they may be less able to resist infections and other diseases. It’s important to be aware of any condition that warrants your veterinarian’s attention. Signs of aging can be different in dogs and cats, making it doubly important to learn what to look for.

If your pet is a “senior”, what can you do to ensure your pet remains healthy and active for as long as possible? **Preventative care** is key to giving your “senior” pet the best quality of life. If medical problems are recognized and treated when they are first detected the treatment may be easier for your pet and less costly for you.

We offer a **Senior Care Program** for older pets and recommend a Senior Wellness Exam every six months to help catch problems sooner. This exam is more extensive than a simple checkup and includes a complete physical exam, recording of body weight and condition, review of your pet’s nutrition, and a pain evaluation. Some laboratory work may be done, including a complete blood count, urinalysis, fecal exam and chemistry panel. Establishing a baseline of your pet’s health is an added benefit and can ultimately help your pet should there be any changes, even small ones to your pet’s health. Even if your pet seems perfectly healthy, regular wellness check ups are important to manage many of the changes associated with aging. Our Senior Care Program can provide a means to target age related health problems, institute preventative health care measures, and detect any disorders early enough to provide appropriate medical treatment.

Pets can be the most rewarding when they reach middle or old age. They’ve been your companion for many years and have a special routine with you. Maintaining the health of your senior pet is part of your mutually beneficial relationship and can provide both of you with many more years of love and companionship.