

Caring for senior pets

Our pets often require special care as they grow older. Here's how to recognize signs of aging in your cat or dog—and how to keep them happy and healthy longer.

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When is a pet considered a senior?

Cats and small dogs: 10 years of age

Medium and large dogs: 6-7 years of age



Signs of normal aging

Many of the common signs of aging for pets are very similar to those for humans.

- Graying on muzzle or feet
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Diminished hearing

However, some changes can also be signs of age-related disease.

- **Cloudy eyes** can be a sign of diminished or loss of vision
- **Decreased activity** can be a sign of pain or inflammation
- **Grumpy behavior** can be a sign of soreness and discomfort



Care considerations for older pets

Diet: May include lower calorie, softer foods and/or supplements (as recommended by your pet's veterinarian)

Sleep: Softer or heated beds

Mobility: Ramps or stairs to allow no-jump access to sofas or human beds

Exercise: Shorter, more gentle intervals of regular exercise

Care: More frequent check-ins with your veterinarian

Common senior pet medical conditions

Canine arthritis

- 🔍 Look for stiffness in mobility
- 📊 Risk is 2.5x greater in senior dogs
- 🐾 Most common disease of senior dogs

Canine heart disease

- 🔍 Look for decreased exercise tolerance
- 📊 Risk is 6x greater in senior dogs
- 🐾 Small and toy purebred dogs face higher risk

Feline kidney disease

- 🔍 Look for changes in potty habits
- 📊 Risk is 7.5x greater in senior cats
- 🐾 Most common disease of senior cats

Feline thyroid disease

- 🔍 Look for changes in weight
- 📊 Risk is 16x greater in senior cats
- 🐾 Third most common disease of senior cats

Based on Nationwide claims data. "Risk" refers to relative risk of having submitted a claim as a senior versus other life stages, as defined by AAHA Life Stage Guidelines.

How do you prepare for your pet aging?

Lifelong pet protection should start early:

- Establish healthy diet and exercise routines now
- Schedule regular checkups with your vet
- Get pet insurance early to reduce the number of pre-existing condition exclusions



Nationwide protects your pets through all stages of life.
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