



**Good Friends
Animal
Hospital**

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Signs of the Aging Pet

Cats are considered geriatric when they are about 10-12 years old. Small dogs also reach that milestone until they are 10 or 11 years old, yet very large dogs are geriatric when they are 6-7 years old.

Older pets, just like older people, have different medical needs. They need more frequent examinations in order to check for early warning signs of disease. Along with examinations they also need to have laboratory tests done. This helps us to make the right recommendations for your pet.

There are some early signs of diseases that require further investigation. Pay close attention to your pet's daily habits so you can report any changes promptly. Increased drinking or urinating can be the first sign of several different problems and always require a trip to the veterinarian. Are you finding accidents in the house? Is your cat's litter box wetter than normal? Do you find you need to fill up the water dish more frequently?

Is your pet stiff when it first gets up? Does it seem slower on a walk or in going up or down stairs? Is there a slight limp? Many people assume that all pets will develop these signs just because they are old. The symptoms mean there is something going on that's abnormal, and we can probably do something to help.

Has your pet lost weight recently without you putting it on a diet? Does your pet seem fat all of a sudden? Any weight change for no apparent reason can be significant. Have you noticed bad breath? Do your pet's teeth look dirty? Are the gums reddened, especially next to the teeth? Older pets need to have their teeth cleaned to improve their health.

Any lumps and bumps that develop should be examined. We usually recommend removing it and sending it to a lab to find out what it is. You can't tell for sure what a lump is just by looking at it.