



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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***Health Care for Your Pet's Golden Years***

**Nutrition**

This is one of the most important things you can do to ensure good health.

- We advise a high quality, digestible food with no artificial preservatives or colors.
- We carry foods at Good Friends Animal Hospital that meets these criteria.
- A prescription diet may be prescribed for a specific health problem.
- Weight control is very important as many serious diseases are aggravated by excess weight. We may recommend a reduced calorie food (many of the “light” foods in the stores don’t seem to work well).
- Antioxidant vitamin and minerals are usually needed to make sure your pet gets enough nutrients to deal with aging problems.
- Fish oil supplements and digestive enzymes can improve your senior’s health.

**Laboratory Testing**

Besides nutrition, this is the most important thing you can do to help your pet live longer.

- Routine testing helps us to find problems at an early stage when we can modify diets or add specific supplements to help the body to slow down or stop the progression of diseases.
- A Complete Blood Count, chemistry panel and urine test should be done at least once a year.
- Cats should also have a thyroid test annually.
- All pets would also benefit from a chest X-ray and ECG to look for early signs of heart problems.

**Dental Care**

Dental care is important at all ages, but becomes more so in aging pets.

- Gum infections from tarter buildup and gingivitis cause bacteria to enter the blood stream and spread throughout the body. The heart and kidneys are especially susceptible to getting infected. The older pet has a harder time fighting off these infections.
- Cleaning the teeth is extremely important for good overall health.

**Parasites**

Worms are an added stress and burden to the systems of older pets. A stool sample should be checked at least once a year, and all dogs and cats should be on a heartworm preventative medicine.

**Arthritis**

Many older pets develop signs of stiffness and a harder time in getting around. Although this is common, it is not normal and indicates your pet is having some pain and discomfort. The earlier you treat this, the easier it is to keep it under control so your pet can continue to move easily. We have many natural remedies that can be used for arthritis and try to avoid drugs as long as possible. We usually recommend having X-rays taken to make sure it is a problem with arthritis and not some other disease that would need to be treated differently.