



Mountainview Animal Hospital

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER



The Bottom Line

A simple blood and urine test can detect kidney, liver, thyroid and hormonal diseases before your pet even begins to show symptoms of illness. How easy is that!

Dogs and cats feel dental pain the same way humans do, they just do not complain as much as people.

Only in extreme conditions will an animal stop eating, there is no advantage to be gained by starving.

The average life span of a cat is about 14 years. The oldest cat reported was 37 years!

The average life span of a mid size dog is about 13 years. The oldest dog reported was 29 1/2 years!



CELEBRATING SENIORS

It occurred to me recently that my cat Findling is 11 years old. That makes her a senior cat. Where did the time go? It seems like it was just yesterday that I was bottle feeding this tiny grey orphan. Although she is still very active and healthy, I worry sometimes. She is entering the age of chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, failing vision and hearing, and a general sense that her body will become weaker. My first instinct is to reject these negative thoughts and focus on how cute and feisty she still is; but denial only prevents me from dealing with reality. Instead I choose to be vigilant and to focus on all of the things I can do to make her senior years happy, healthy and enjoyable for the both of us. And of course I tell myself that she will live forever.

So what changes will I be watching for as Findling ages? Well, some of the changes may be quite subtle and mask very complex and serious diseases. Simple mood or behaviour changes may indicate pain, nausea and weakness. Taking shorter steps when she walks, avoiding stairs or not jumping up to her usual places may be signs of painful arthritis. Dogs will circle more before lying down, and some pets will shrink away from being touched in certain places or suddenly resent being groomed. They will almost never whine or cry from pain, making it difficult to detect sometimes. Keeping our pets' weight under control, changing their exercise routine and wonderful new medications for arthritic pain can give our loved ones a whole new lease on the "golden years".

Dental disease is a common problem for older pets. Their breath smells foul, their gums are red and painful and their teeth may even be loose and puffy. They may run low grade fevers and feel nauseous from the chronic infection in the mouth. Heart, kidney and liver disease can develop as a result of periodontal disease. Our pets will almost never stop eating from dental disease; starving is hardly a good alternative

in their minds. Instead they just stop chewing their food and swallow their kibbles whole. Keeping our pet's teeth clean will not only help them live longer, but certainly better.

Changes in how much our senior pets eat, drink and urinate are big clues to many diseases. Diabetes, thyroid disease and kidney failure are all common ailments in aged pets. Routine check ups, along with blood and urine tests can detect these diseases before they cause permanent damage to the body. Simple changes to the diet or medications can control or slow the progress of many conditions.

Signs of confusion, house soiling, vocalization or a lack of interest in the family may be a sign of cognitive deficit or senility. Believe it or not, there are special diets and medications for this too.

There is a lot we can do to help pets age well, provided we know what is happening in their bodies. More frequent check ups and simple blood and urine test will help us keep ahead of the aging process.

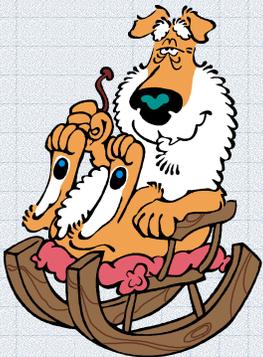
To help all of us to keep abreast of the changes occurring in our senior pets bodies, we have redesigned our senior wellness program. To get us off to a good start we will be celebrating senior health during the month of January. We encourage everyone with cats 10 years of age or older and dogs 8 years and older to schedule a wellness check up. We will give your pet a thorough physical examination, discuss your concerns, and perform a wellness test on a small sample of blood and urine. As a reward and to get you started on the best nutrition for your senior pet, you will receive a free bag of Medical pet food selected specifically to meet your pet's particular needs. Of course, this wellness program is not just available during the month of January, but the free bag of food is. We encourage every one with an aging pet to take advantage of this great opportunity.

The Bottom Line

Aging is influenced by your pet's size and breed, environment, nutritional status (obese pets have some very significant health risks), and disease status.



An overweight pet will suffer greatly in their senior years. Those few extra pounds will make arthritic pain, heart disease, diabetes and liver disease worse and shorten your pet's life.



Arthritic pain may make it more difficult for your older dog to go on the long walks; but exercise is still very important. Instead of one long walk, go on several smaller walks per day. Your old friend will enjoy the extra time together too.

HELPING YOUR OLDER PET THROUGH THE "GOLDEN YEARS"

Our pets have given us so much over the years, so we don't mind giving them a little extra tender loving care during their senior years; they have earned it. Here are some tips to help our old furry friends live a little easier and safer.

- ♥ Putting up baby gates at the top of stairs can prevent pets with poor vision and weak legs from falling down.
- ♥ Pets with arthritis and muscle weakness often have difficulty walking on slippery tile and hardwood floors. Placing plastic or carpet runners will give them a better grip and more confidence while moving around the house.
- ♥ These pets also have difficulty managing the ice and snow. Shoveling a path in the yard and dusting these trails with sand will safely allow an older dog access outdoors during the winter.
- ♥ Our aging pets often have poor vision. It is particularly difficult for them to see at night. Leaving a light on will certainly help. Taking a flashlight along on their walks will help them see where they are going.
- ♥ Pets that can't hear well will startle easily when you approach them. Stomping your foot on the floor to alert them of your approach may avoid accidental bites.
- ♥ Older pets with a loss of senses and arthritic pain may be more sensitive to the fast and often unintentional roughness of children. Teach children to be gentle and respectful. Better yet, have them keep their distance from the very old and weak.
- ♥ Older pets have less muscle mass and poor temperature regulation. They will get cold more easily during the winter months. Keep older cats and dogs indoors more. Outdoor cats that wander off the property may lose critical body temperature and not be able to make it back home again.
- ♥ The colder weather is more likely to exacerbate arthritic pain. So will the dampness of a rainy day. Provide soft warm bedding for pets to sleep on. Gentle heat wraps (careful not too hot!), massages and arthritis medications from your veterinarian can keep your old friend more comfortable.
- ♥ The hot summer months can be hazardous too. Many older pets with heart or kidney disease can become dehydrated and over heated very easily. Make sure there is a fan, air conditioning or a shady place to keep them cool. Have plenty of fresh water available too.
- ♥ The proper diet is very important in the later years of life. Older pets have weaker digestive systems. Many of the treats and people food that they have received in the past may no longer be well tolerated.
- ♥ A premium pet food for seniors is designed to be more digestible and better balanced to suite the special needs of an older body. We would be happy to recommend the appropriate diet for your aging furry friend.
- ♥ Large dogs may have difficulty bending to reach their food and water dishes. Creating a platform to raise their dishes may make mealtime more enjoyable.
- ♥ Speaking of meal time, those rotten teeth are no pleasure to live with. Dental disease will cause your pet pain, low grade fevers, weakened immune systems, worsen heart, kidney and liver disease, and may affect their sense of taste and smell. Keeping your pet's teeth clean is less risky than you think. You will be surprised how drastically it will improve your pet's quality of life.
- ♥ Older pets (just like older people) lose some control of their toiletry habits. Older dogs will need to be taken outdoors more often to relieve themselves. Older cats will need easier access to litter boxes. Have more litter boxes throughout the house. Make sure the sides of the boxes are not too high. Many older cats will not leave their cozy bedroom and go down two flights of stairs to the cold dark basement to climb into the litter box. Although cats do not often show it, they do get the same painful arthritis that dogs and people get.
- ♥ Have your pet checked by your veterinarian regularly, at least every 6 months. A lot of changes can occur in a short period of time in a pet's older body.

HOW OLD IS YOUR PET IN HUMAN YEARS?

OUR PET'S AGE	HUMAN EQUIVALENT			
	SMALL BREED	MEDIUM BREED	LARGE BREED	CAT
6 months				10 years
1 year	15 years	15 years	15 years	15
2	24	24	24	24
3	28	28	28	28
4	32	32	32	32
5	36	36	36	36
6	40	42	45	40
7	44	47	50	44
8	48	51	55	48
9	52	56	61	52
10	56	60	66	56
11	60	65	72	60
12	64	69	77	64
13	68	74	82	68
14	72	78	88	72
15	76	83	93	76
16	80	87	120	80
17	84	92		84
18	88	96		88
19	92	101		92

THE BEGINNING OF THE SENIOR YEARS



Medium and large breed dogs approach the senior years at 8, small dogs and cats at 10 years of age.

As a part of providing the best preventive health care to pets, we encourage clients to have a wellness examination, blood and urine analysis done on their pets annually. This is particularly true for dogs and cats who are 8 years of age and older.

Our pets give us so much; the information we gain from wellness testing can give us the power to help our pets age with the grace and dignity they deserve.

If your pet is 8 years of age or older and has not had a “wellness” profile in the past year, we recommend that you call us to discuss the benefits of this testing for your pet.

The Bottom Line

Did you know that it takes over 2000 pieces of fur to kill a NEC computer monitor? ☺



Four years ago I paid over \$700 for each computer monitor. The flat screens were more than twice that price. Now, those original monitors are no longer available, and the flat screens cost less than \$500. How quickly things change!

Nike is also a senior pet; she turned 11 years old this year. In July we did a wellness exam and testing on her. What a job, Nike is not a very cooperative patient. We are happy to report that all is well with our little feline friend.

Tinsel is a popular Christmas tree decoration but is very dangerous to cats. Once ingested the tinsel causes terrible damage to the intestinal tract.

LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

Most cats kill mice, birds or bugs, but not our Nike, that would require too much effort. Nike prefers much slower moving prey, in fact inanimate prey like my computer monitor. I had always predicted that the monitor Nike liked to sleep on would have a shorter life than the others, but I guess I just wasn't prepared to deal with the expense of a new monitor this soon. Of course, the doctor in me would not allow Nike's victim to die without an attempt to save it, so I performed an exploratory surgery on the monitor. Just as I suspected, there was a foreign body in the belly of my patient. I found fur, lots and lots of fur; enough to build a whole new cat. Although the fur was removed with delicate intricacy, our monitor could not be saved. Nike had been thorough in her attack. After a few days, I accepted my defeat and bought a new monitor. Our receptionists liked it immediately. Its slim design is attractive and allows for more desk space. Nike, on the other hand hated it. For 2 days she stared at it with a scowl. As hard as she tried, she could not figure out how to balance her lazy bum on my new flat screen monitor. One would think that I would have taken pleasure in knowing that Nike could not destroy my new sleek monitor, instead I felt sorry for her. As with all things though, life goes on; and so has Nike. She is now trying to smother the other monitors in the clinic.



CHANGE IS INEVITABLE

Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to our receptionist Ann this fall. She has moved north to be closer to her daughters and grandchildren. Although it was sad to see her go, we wish her luck and happiness in her new ventures.

In her place we hired Michelle. Michelle has studied business law and accounting in college and has a certificate in Veterinary Medical Reception. We are enjoying getting to know Michelle and welcome her to our community.

Sabrina our Registered Veterinary Technician got married this fall to her high school sweetheart. She was a lovely bride. We wish the newly weds many happy years together. But mostly we are glad to have her back from her honeymoon; the day just does not run as smoothly without her.

WE VALUE YOUR OPINION, PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

A quick survey has been included in this mailing. As our valued client, your thoughts are important to us. We would love to hear your opinion on changes we wish to make to our office hours. Please take a little time to read it over and respond.

Holiday Hours

Dec. 24th - Christmas Eve: 9am - 12 noon
Dec. 25th - Christmas Day: Closed
Dec. 26th - Boxing Day: Closed
Dec. 27th: Closed
Dec. 31st - New Years Eve: 9am - 12 noon
Jan 1st - New Years Day: Closed
Jan 2nd: Closed

Unless otherwise specified here Mountainview Animal Hospital will be open during its regular office hours. Animals in the hospital over the holidays will receive the same great care and attention as always. For those patients requiring emergency care over Christmas and New Years, The Emergency Veterinary Clinic on Hwy 10 will be open to serve your pet's medical and surgical needs. You can call ahead at 905-495-9907 or go directly there. The Emergency Veterinary Clinic is located on the south east corner of highway 10 and Wexford Rd, just one block north of Bovaird (Highway 7).

From all of us at Mountainview Animal Hospital,
we wish all of you

**A Very Merry Christmas, A Joyous
Holiday Season and A Happy New Year!**

PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

I am considering discontinuing doctor appointments on Saturdays. The office will still be open for food sales and patient admission and discharges on Saturdays from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon but I (Dr. Ewing) will not be seeing clients for appointments. Doctor appointments will still be available from Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Allow me to explain. When we first opened I was available for appointments 6 days a week and 24 hours a day for emergencies. Trying to find some time to myself was difficult. Attempts to take time off during the week have been largely unsuccessful. Because the emergency hospital does not open until 7:00 pm during the week, an ear infection, vomiting cat or limping dog usually required me to return to the office. I am not complaining though, I am lucky to love my job and the animals I work with but I do require some rest and relaxation. Saturdays are often our quietest day for appointments despite the fact that I am already only available on alternate Saturdays. It seems that the people of Georgetown use the weekends for family time, forcing most of you to use our services during the week anyway. Since the emergency clinic is open 24 hours a day over the weekend, it seems to make sense for me to take time off then. Rest assured, patients that are already in the hospital will still get my full attention and care.

Now that I have explained myself, I will pose you this question. Would your decision to use Mountainview Animal Hospital change if we are closed for appointments on Saturdays?

Please circle  YES NO

COMMENTS:

Although the final decision about our office hours rests with me, my decision will be influenced by what you say. I would appreciate you mailing, dropping off or calling in your response to the clinic. I will be making my decision by the end of January. I know everybody is very busy; I thank you for your time.