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How to keep a senior pet happy



Senior pets are special. They are loyal and loving and in most cases, will have been through a number of major life events with you. The senior years can creep up on our furry friends and most people aren't even aware that dogs and cats are classified as senior when they reach 8 years of age!

We think it's important you are aware of some of the things you can do to help keep your senior pet happy and healthy so here are our top tips:

Feed an appropriate diet

As our pets age, their nutritional requirements change. Older animals don't cope well with excessive nutrients or particular deficiencies. Protein levels in their diet are important, as is their calorie intake. Being the correct weight can have a huge impact on their quality of life and mobility. We recommend you feed your senior friend a complete and balanced premium food suitable for a mature pet. Please ask us for a specific diet recommendation.

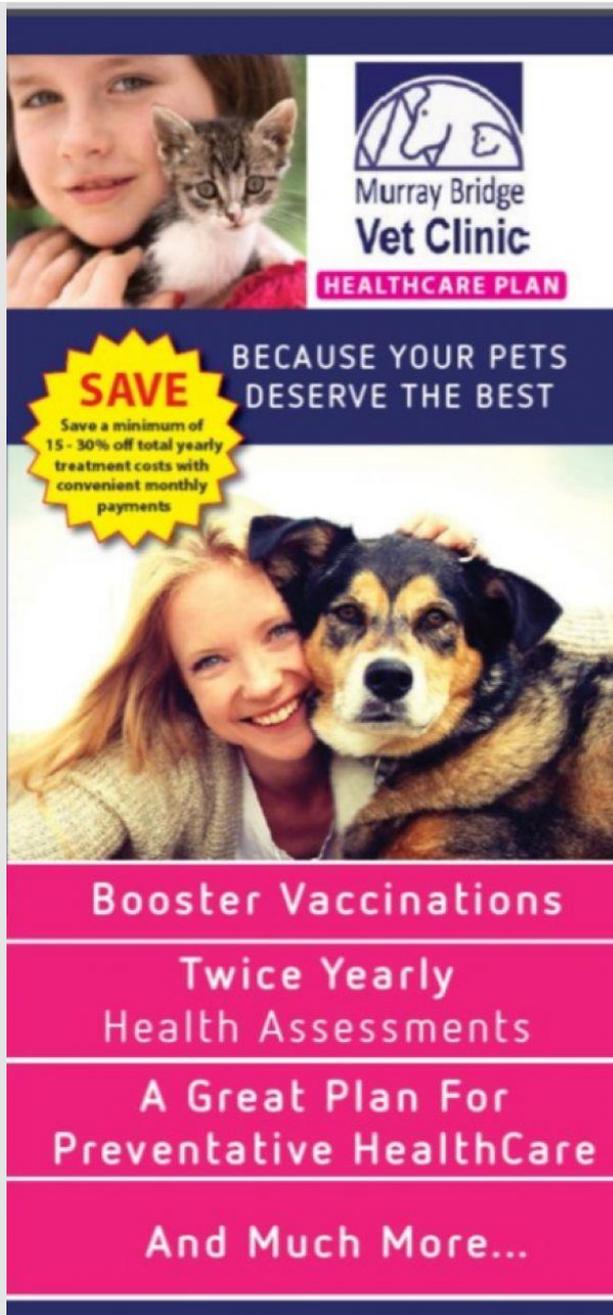
Keep an eye out for changes at home

You know your pet better than anyone, so keeping an eye out for any changes is a critical habit to develop. Fluctuations in weight, appetite, thirst and urination can be an indication that there's something amiss. The presence of a cough, a change in sleeping habits, stiff joints and accidents around the house can also ring alarm bells. Get in the habit of running your hands over your pet every week to feel for any new lumps or bumps. If you find anything new or unusual, arrange a check with us as soon as possible. And don't be tempted to put changes down to 'just getting old'.

Arrange twice-yearly health checks

An average year for your pet can be equivalent to 6-8 years for humans, so it should be no surprise that many changes can occur to your pet's health over 12 months. More regular health checks are absolutely essential for your ageing pet, even if you don't notice any changes at home. A check-up at least every 6 months will help us monitor your pet and allow us to perform any necessary blood and urine tests or further imaging. Prevention of disease and early management is always ideal. Our aim is to help your pet live a happier and more comfortable life.

Phone us if you have any questions about your senior pet, we are here to give you the best advice.



**Murray Bridge
Vet Clinic**
HEALTHCARE PLAN

SAVE
Save a minimum of
15 - 30% off total yearly
treatment costs with
convenient monthly
payments

BECAUSE YOUR PETS
DESERVE THE BEST

Booster Vaccinations

**Twice Yearly
Health Assessments**

**A Great Plan For
Preventative HealthCare**

And Much More...

Have you heard of our Pet Healthcare Plan?

If you would like to know more about it, follow this link to our [website!](#)

Here you will find how the plan could help you to provide comprehensive preventative healthcare for your pet, spread the cost and take advantage of special offers for Pet Healthcare Members.



Puppy Pre School

Congratulations to the puppies who have graduated from the May Puppy Pre School Classes.

Class 1

Baloo
Major
Murf
Olli
Rupert
Timber

Class 2

Daisy
Judge
Rosie
Winston

To view all the adorable graduation photos please visit our [website](#).

What will my puppy gain from Puppy Pre School?

Your puppy will gain valuable social skills by simply interacting with other puppies and people. These skills the pup develops it will use for life. Your puppy will learn how to interact with lots of people, loud noises and children and even a visit to the vet will become fun rather than something to shake about. Your puppy will develop into a friendly, educated, confident adult dog.

How will I benefit?

Owning a dog will be enjoyable rather than a chore. Having an obedient, well socialised dog is much more pleasant and stress free. You will also gain knowledge in all areas of pet care from dental, nutrition, solving behavioural problems, toilet training and lots, lots more. Weekly freebies and samples to take home for the puppy. For more information please visit our [website](#).

Dental care for senior pets



It is very common for us to see an older pet with dental disease but many people can be reluctant to pursue a dental procedure as they are worried about their senior pet having to undergo an anaesthetic.

As our pets age, they may not be as good at fighting off bacterial and viral diseases as they once were so this is the time when good dental health is absolutely essential. Untreated, dental disease can also lead to other problems such as heart disease and kidney disease, not to mention cause your pet considerable pain.

It's not uncommon for senior pets to have worn-down teeth or be missing the odd tooth and this can potentially affect their ability to chew and digest their food. They may also have painful gingivitis or exposure of the sensitive parts of the teeth secondary to dental disease. Given that our pets can be very good at hiding pain, many owners put the subtle changes of dental disease, such as being a bit quieter than usual or a reduced appetite down to 'just getting old'.

Veterinary anaesthetics are equivalent to those used in human medicine and are very safe. In order to provide your senior pet with the safest anaesthetic possible, prior to the procedure, we may recommend a blood and urine test to check the overall health of your pet and tailor the anaesthetic protocol accordingly. Your pet may also go on an intravenous drip to help protect their kidneys (if their blood pressure happens to drop during the procedure) and this will also allow them to recover from the anaesthetic faster.

Regular dental checks along with a whole-body examination will help reduce the likelihood of dental issues and ensure your pet is happy and comfortable, something every pet deserves in their old age.

We are always happy to discuss any questions you might have about your pet's health.

Case study: Canine Vestibular Disease



Toby is a 12-year-old German Shorthaired Pointer who went to bed as normal one evening only to wake the next morning unable to stand. It was as if Toby had suddenly lost his balance altogether. He appeared to have a head tilt and his eyes were 'jerking' irregularly.

His owners were understandably very distressed. His decline was so rapid and they felt something very sinister was at play. They prepared themselves for the worst.

Examination of Toby revealed he was most likely suffering from signs of Canine Vestibular Disease (also referred to as 'old dog disease').

The vestibular system is located in the brain but has components in the inner ear and middle ear too. It is basically in charge of maintaining normal balance but if it's not well, things can go haywire!

What causes vestibular disease?

Middle or inner ear infections, drugs that are toxic to the ear, trauma or injury, tumours, and hypothyroidism can all cause vestibular symptoms. Thankfully Toby had none of these and when no specific cause is found, the condition is called 'idiopathic vestibular syndrome'.

Toby was given a drug to help reduce any nausea he was suffering from his loss of balance. He also needed to be supported to stand over the next few days but thankfully improved rapidly (another characteristic of the idiopathic form of the disease).

What is Toby's prognosis?

The symptoms of the disease are most severe in the first 24-48 hours. Most patients improve over a 2-3 week period as was the case for Toby. If he had failed to improve or deteriorated even further, we would have recommended further diagnostic testing (such as an MRI) to see if there was a hidden underlying cause.

We are always here to answer any questions you might have about the health of your pet.

Why you should adopt an older pet



If you've been thinking about getting a new pet have you considered adopting an older animal? There are plenty of positives when it comes to giving an older pet a home and a great companion is just one of them!

Here are three good reasons why an older pet can be a good choice:

1. You know what you are getting when it comes to size and temperament plus they are also generally more mellow, relaxed and independent.
2. Senior pets are mostly toilet-trained which means you can relax a bit when it comes to potty-training and the state of your carpet!
3. You are giving a pet a second chance at finding a forever home. You might be surprised at how these pets seem to know how lucky they are, and turn out to be fantastic pets and life-long companions.

We can point you in the right direction when it comes to adopting any pet - ask us for more information.

This email contains comments of a general nature only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional veterinary advice. It should not be relied on as the basis for whether you do or don't do anything.

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