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SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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WHY PREVENTIVE TESTING IS CRUCIAL FOR SENIOR PETS

Recent life stage guidelines by the AAFP and AAHA (American Association of Feline Practitioners and American Animal Hospital Association) emphasize the importance of a thorough consultation and physical exam at all dog and cat life stages. Visit frequency and testing recommendations should be adjusted as your pet ages. Senior and geriatric pets should be seen at least semi-annually to allow for earlier detection of and intervention for chronic disease.

Laboratory testing (including complete blood count, chemistry panel, urinalysis, and infectious disease screening) is one of the best methods to identify some common medical conditions that may not be identified through a history and physical exam alone. Recent studies have demonstrated the widespread presence of laboratory abnormalities in healthy-appearing dogs and cats. (Continued on next page)



WHY PREVENTIVE TESTING IS CRUCIAL FOR SENIOR PETS (CONTINUED)

Common senior pet health issues

As pets age, organ systems often begin to deteriorate due to factors such as genetics, breed, or their environment. Often, the exact cause of age-related illness is not determined. The good news is that many of these diseases can be effectively treated and monitored with early diagnosis. These include (but are not limited to):

- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Heart disease
- Degenerative joint disease
- Dental disease
- Cancer
- Endocrine disease
 - Thyroid disease
 - Adrenal gland disease
 - Diabetes mellitus
- Intestinal disease



“Patient trending” throughout the pet’s life can be very useful in predicting disease – as opposed to waiting for the pet to become symptomatic – and to test for severity of disease. With patient trending, the veterinarian performs diagnostic tests regularly over the life of the pet to look for subtle changes, such as changes in kidney values that may indicate early disease prior to elevations beyond the reference interval. Intervening earlier may allow for improved longevity and quality of life.

Benefits of preventive testing for senior pets

- **Assesses Your Pet's Internal Organ Health**
Liver, kidney, and thyroid diseases are common and can be treated once diagnosed.
- **It's Non-Invasive**
Advanced testing can be performed with a brief office visit and a small blood, fecal, and/or urine sample.
- **It Reveals Your Pet’s True Health Status**
Your pet can’t talk and will hide disease naturally – lab testing helps identify issues that pets cannot speak to.
- **It Provides a Clean Bill of Health Inside and Out**
Veterinarians can detect disease earlier with regular testing and trending results.

Written by Michelle Larsen, DVM

 Click Here
Online Store Promos

Bonus deal!

10% off a one-time order

Use code: **10ITCHY**



Use code 10ITCHY to save 10% on your entire order – valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes all medications and vaccines. Other restrictions apply. Offers cannot be combined. Only one coupon can be used per order. Valid 8/1/25 - 8/31/25

It's Itchy Pet Awareness Month

Save 20% on a new AutoShip order with code 20RELIEF



Use code 20RELIEF to get 20% off a new AutoShip order – valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes all medications and vaccines. Other restrictions apply. Offers cannot be combined. Only one coupon can be used per order. Valid 8/1/25 - 8/31/25

A summertime mystery

Use code SUMMERDEAL to reveal your savings at checkout

 **20% Off** 



Use code SUMMERDEAL – valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes all medications and vaccines. Other restrictions apply. Valid 8/1/25 - 8/31/25

WHAT TO KNOW WHEN ADOPTING A SENIOR PET

When most people think of adopting a pet, their first thought is a puppy or kitten. Senior pets are often overlooked at the shelter, and they can have a difficult time adjusting to shelter life. But these “wiser” dogs and cats just might be the perfect match for your family.

Before adopting a pet, it's best to match your lifestyle with the type of pet you get. It's not just the breed to think about — age plays a big factor in how much training, exercise, and overall care they'll need. Puppies and kittens aren't right for every family, are a lot of accidents, energy, and training (especially with puppies) involved to get through the early stages of their lives.

Adopting a senior pet might be a great option — they're easy-to-love, potty trained, and often require less exercise than their younger counterparts. And, you can teach a dog (or cat!) new tricks or train them out of behaviors you don't like.

What Classifies a Pet as “Senior”?

Dogs and cats become seniors at different points in their lives. Cats are thought to be senior between the ages of 7 and 11, while dogs are considered senior between the ages of 7 and 9 (large breeds will become senior sooner, while small breeds become senior later). While it's not always the case, older dogs and cats may have preexisting medical conditions. However, these are usually already diagnosed, being treated, or successfully managed, making it easier for you to anticipate what medical care your pet will need. It's important to keep in mind that age is not a disease — older pets can be just as healthy as younger ones!

How to Adopt a Senior Pet

So, what might you expect when you adopt a senior pet? A lot of times, senior pets are fostered rather than housed at your local shelter. This is because older dogs and cats often have a harder time in the shelter environment after spending most of their lives in a comfortable home. The foster parent will likely be able to give you some real-world insight into how your prospective pet has done with other pets, children, and even a variety of sights, sounds, and objects in the home. If the dog or cat is being fostered, your local animal shelter or foster organization will need to coordinate a time for you to meet with your potential pet.

How to Care for a Senior Pet

Now that you've given a sweet senior pet a new home, it's time to give them a great life. Did you know that only 14% of senior pets undergo regular health screenings by their veterinarian? That's a shame, since if disease or pain were caught earlier, these pets would live longer, happier lives. And in the long run, catching things earlier can save you money. Make sure to have your veterinarian run point-of-care tests such as blood chemistry, urine, and hematology tests to establish a baseline of their health and to take disease prevention measures.

When you adopt a senior pet, you're giving them a stable, loving home to live out their years — and they'll repay you in joy and all the couch snuggles you can handle.

**“Old dogs, like old shoes, are comfortable. They might be a bit out of shape and a little worn around the edges, but they fit well.”
— Bonnie Wilcox**

ACOC Birthdays

Jodi - 8/11
Dr. Wendy Frankmann - 8/17
Emilia - 8/26
Mike - 8/31
Jillian - 8/31

