

SEPTEMBER 2025



SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

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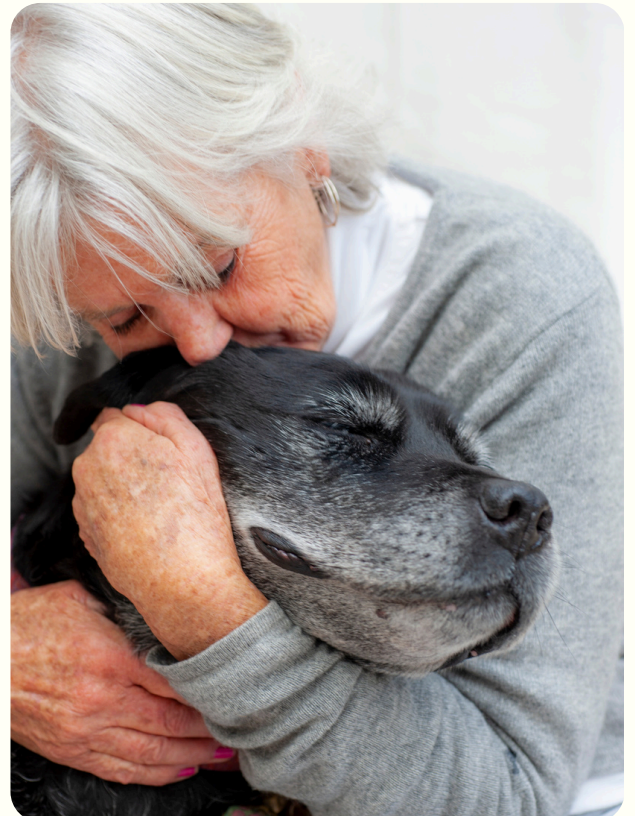
UNDERSTANDING CHRONIC ILLNESS IN DOGS AND CATS

As pets live longer, we're seeing more cases of chronic (long-term) illnesses in dogs and cats. While a diagnosis of a chronic condition can feel overwhelming, it doesn't have to mean a poor quality of life. With early detection, ongoing care, and the right management plan, many pets can continue to live happy, comfortable lives.

What is a Chronic Illness?

A chronic illness is a condition that persists for months or years, often requiring lifelong management rather than a one-time treatment. Examples include:

- Diabetes mellitus
- Chronic kidney disease
- Arthritis
- Heart disease
- Thyroid disorders (hyperthyroidism in cats, hypothyroidism in dogs)
- Allergies and skin conditions



Continued on next page

UNDERSTANDING CHRONIC ILLNESS IN DOGS AND CATS (CONTINUED)

Signs to Watch For

Early signs of chronic illness can be subtle. Contact your veterinarian if you notice:

- Changes in appetite or weight
- Increased thirst or urination
- Lethargy or decreased activity
- Difficulty jumping, climbing, or getting up
- Persistent coughing, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Changes in behavior or mood
- Poor coat quality or hair loss



Why Early Detection Matters

Catching chronic conditions early often means:

- More treatment options
- Slower disease progression
- Better quality of life
- Lower long-term care costs

Routine wellness exams and regular bloodwork can identify changes before your pet shows obvious symptoms.

Managing Chronic Illness

While chronic illnesses can't always be cured, they can be managed with:

- Medications: Daily pills, injections, or topical treatments
- Prescription diets: Tailored to support specific health needs
- Lifestyle changes: Weight management, gentle exercise, and mobility aids
- Regular monitoring: Follow-up exams, lab tests, and at-home observations

Your veterinarian will work with you to create a treatment plan that fits your pet's needs and your lifestyle.

Quality of Life is the Goal

Our focus in managing chronic illness is not just prolonging life—it's ensuring that life is worth living. This means keeping your pet:

- Comfortable
- Mobile
- Able to enjoy favorite activities
- Free from uncontrolled pain or distress



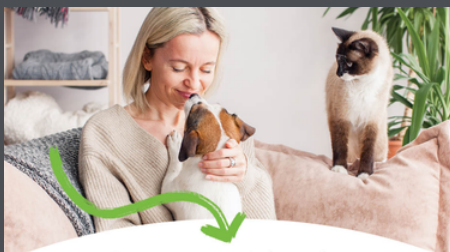
How You Can Help Your Pet

- Stick to the treatment plan consistently
- Monitor and record symptoms at home
- Keep up with regular vet visits
- Ask questions if something changes or doesn't seem right

Bottom line:

A chronic illness diagnosis is not the end—it's the start of a new chapter where your pet can still thrive with the right care. Veterinary medicine offers more tools than ever to keep pets with chronic conditions living happy, comfortable lives.


Online
Store
Promos




Our summer sale is ending

Save 15% on your order with code 15SUMMEREND

Use code 15SUMMEREND - valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes medications and veterinary services. Other restrictions apply. Offer cannot be combined. Only one coupon can be used per order. 10/1/25 - 10/31/25

Fall for these deals

\$10 off your first 3 AutoShip orders with code 30FALLSALE



Use code 30FALLSALE to get \$10 off your first 3 AutoShip orders - valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes medications and veterinary services. Other restrictions apply. Offer cannot be combined. Only one coupon can be used per order. 10/1/25 - 10/31/25

Fall for these deals

10% off a one-time order with code 10FALLFRENZY



Use code 10FALLFRENZY to save 10% on your one-time order - valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Excludes medications and veterinary services. Other restrictions apply. Offer cannot be combined. Only one coupon can be used per order. 10/1/25 - 10/31/25

WHY IS MY DOG SO ITCHY?

Fleas and Flea Allergy Dermatitis

One common cause of itching in pets is a hypersensitivity to flea bites, also known as flea allergy dermatitis. It doesn't take many fleas to whip your dog into a scratching and grooming frenzy, but the condition isn't always easy to identify and is frequently mistaken for a rash. Often, you won't see any fleas because they spend most of their lives off of your pet. Your veterinarian may want to use a flea comb to look for the little critters or their "dirt" (excrement). If there are any fleas, your veterinarian will put your dog on a flea preventative and perform further tests to rule out other causes of itch. If your dog is diagnosed with flea allergy dermatitis, your veterinarian will dispense medication to control the itch and will recommend an aggressive flea control plan for your dog, his environment, and other pets in the house. Prevention is simple: keep your dog from getting fleas! Talk to your veterinarian about the best flea prevention methods for your dog.



What's Eating Your Dog? It Could Be Mites!

Fleas aren't the only critters that like to live on your dog. Mites can also be a pain, though they are a whole lot smaller. The two most common types of mites – sarcoptes and demodex – can cause secondary skin infections in addition to itching. And while sarcoptes mites tend to affect the ears, elbows, and chest of a dog, demodex mites are less particular and can appear anywhere on a dog's body. If your veterinarian suspects that your dog has mites, he or she will perform skin scrapings to look at under a microscope. However, sometimes this isn't enough – mites are so small, they can't always be detected, so your veterinarian may choose to treat your dog based on suspicion of mites. If the condition clears up after treatment, the diagnosis has been confirmed. One thing to note: if your dog has highly-contagious sarcoptes mites, all dogs in the household need to be treated.

Bacterial and Fungal Infections

An itch has to be scratched, but all that increased scratching by your dog damages the skin, which can result in bacterial and fungal infections as secondary conditions to itching. Common signs of infection include inflamed, reddened skin, areas of hair loss, and ear infections. These infections also often cause your dog to have an unpleasant odor. In order to diagnose a bacterial or fungal infection, your veterinarian will collect samples for culture or examination under a microscope.

Food Allergies

Tiny organisms aren't the only thing that can give your dog allergies. Food can also cause problems, and food allergies often arise out of the blue. When a dog becomes sensitive to food – often a protein like chicken, beef, or lamb – that he used to easily tolerate, food allergies could be the culprit. This can happen at any time, even if a pet's diet remains unchanged. It's not always easy to distinguish food allergies from a simple upset stomach or other allergic conditions, but if the symptoms persist, food allergies may be the cause.

If food allergies are suspected, your veterinarian will perform a physical exam and ask for a detailed history of your dog's food intake. But the only way to diagnose a food allergy is through hypoallergenic diet trial to see if it alleviates your dog's symptoms. The diet shouldn't contain anything your dog has recently eaten and he won't be able to eat any treats or supplements unless approved by your veterinarian. The only treatment for food allergy is avoidance. This may seem like common sense – don't feed your dog foods to which he is allergic. But it's not always easy to identify foods that are both nutritionally balanced and devoid of problem ingredients for your pet. Your veterinarian will help guide you and your dog for long-term diet management. Atopic Dermatitis Sometimes, the answer to your dog's itching problem is "none of the above." If your dog continues to itch for no apparent reason, there's a chance he has atopic dermatitis. Similar to "hay fever" in people, atopic dermatitis is caused by a reaction to environmental allergens such as pollen, mold spores, or plant fibers. If your pet is diagnosed with atopic dermatitis, allergy testing and allergenspecific immunotherapy may be the best option from your dog.

“The difference between friends and pets is that friends we allow into our company, pets we allow into our solitude.” – Robert Brault

ACOC Birthdays

Jessi - 9/4
Dr. Tom Frankmann - 9/28

