

COMMON MEDICAL CONDITIONS IN SENIOR PETS

Health Category	Examples of Common Senior Diseases	Signs	If Left Untreated	Your Veterinarian May Recommend
 Dental	periodontal disease, gingivitis, cancer	bad breath, redness in gums, swollen gums, mass	heart disease, tooth loss, kidney and liver disorder, systemic infection, cancer progression	oral exam, preanesthetic blood work,* x-rays, biopsy, urinalysis
 Liver	inflammatory, degenerative and cancerous liver disease	decreased appetite, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, increased thirst/urination	hypoalbuminemia, lipid metabolism disturbance, anemia, bleeding disorders, liver failure	physical exam, blood work,* x-rays, ultrasound, biopsy, urinalysis
 Kidney	kidney failure, kidney stones, kidney infection, kidney insufficiency	increased thirst/urination, decreased appetite, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, back pain	progression to kidney failure, heart disease, electrolyte upsets, fluid balance disturbance, death	physical exam, blood work,* x-rays, ultrasound, urinalysis, urine culture, urine protein:creatinine ratio
 Heart and Lungs	cardiac disease, pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema	decreased stamina, coughing, difficulty breathing, weight loss, pot belly	progression to renal and liver disease, poor vascular perfusion, eventual death	chest x-rays, ECG, blood pressure, baseline blood work,* ultrasound, urinalysis
 Joints	arthritis, hip dysplasia, back disease	lameness, reluctance to walk or exercise, decreased appetite, discomfort/pain	progressive disease, reduced mobility, neurologic deficits	physical examination, blood work* (especially for fluid medications), Lyme test, x-rays, urinalysis, joint analysis
 Endocrine System	diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, hypoadrenocorticism, hyperadrenocorticism	noticeable weight change, increased appetite without weight gain, vomiting, increased water consumption, frequent urination, change in energy level, coat or skin problems	heart failure, kidney failure, secondary metabolic disease	blood work,* specific endocrine profile, urinalysis
 Cancer	cancers of the skin, spleen, liver, lymphoid tissue, etc.	bleeding, lumps, irritated skin, identified mass, swollen lymph nodes, vomiting, diarrhea	can progress to organ failure or death	blood work,* physical exam, cytology, biopsy, urinalysis
 Ocular	cataracts, dry eye, glaucoma	grayish blue hue at the center of the eye; rubbing; pressing head against objects; swelling; redness; irritation; tearing	difficulty seeing, corneal ulceration, can progress to blindness, loss of eye	ocular exam, baseline blood work,* urinalysis
 Gastrointestinal System	inflammatory bowel disease, pancreatitis, cancer, colitis	vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, fluid gain	further weight loss, disease will progress to potential death	blood work,* physical exam, urinalysis, x-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy, biopsy

*Blood work includes complete blood count (CBC) and full biochemistry profile including electrolytes. Reviewed by Dennis B. DeNicola, DVM, PhD, DACVP; Roberta Relford, DVM, MS, PhD, DACVIM, DACVP; and Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DABVP