

## **Eight Symptoms of Aging**

### **1. Reduced appetite**

If your senior dog seems off his food, he may be suffering from broken or loose teeth, sore and infected gums, or the loss of his sense of smell. A reduced appetite can also signify more serious health problems such as kidney disease or liver failure, for example.

### **2. Increased drinking**

Increased water consumption can suggest several problems. The two most common are kidney disease, or diabetes. It can also indicate senile changes, or prostate problems.

### **3. Weight Changes**

When feeding your dog, monitor any weight gain or loss. A change of more than 10% of his weight is usually significant. Losses may suggest a metabolic change suggestive of cancer, kidney disease or digestive or liver problems. Weight gain could be due to hypothyroidism, or adrenal gland malfunction.

### **4. Incontinence**

Accidents of urination can be caused by diabetes, kidney disease, or disc disease. Other problems can include detrusor muscle atrophy, prostate disorders, urinary tract infections, and senility.

### **5. Confusion**

Canine Cognitive Dysfunction, other wise known as Alzheimer's disease in humans often results in confusion. A regression of house training, confusion, an appearance of being lost, or out of it is all signs of this aging process.

### **6. Reduced Activity**

Maybe your pet is not jumping up on his favorite couch or bed, or following you around the house like he usually does. This may be a sign of arthritis, or suggest hypothyroidism, or other major organ disorder.

### **7. Hearing Loss**

Often, an older pet will become totally deaf within a period of six months to a year. Signs of this include startling easily when he is approached from behind, not seeing you when you call him, until you stamp on the floor and cause it to vibrate, thereby alerting him to your presence.

### **8. Vision Loss**

Cloudy eyes, running into walls, hesitancy to play and run about are all signs of vision loss. These could be signs of cataract development, or glaucoma.

As your dog ages, watch him closely for any of the above signs. If you notice any of them, contact your veterinarian for an exam and advice about your concerns. Regular health maintenance exams can improve the chances that your veterinarian can catch problems in the early stages, and treat them better as a result too.