



Senior Pets Have Lots to Give, Including Good Human Health



Here's how to keep your older pets healthy and how they benefit your own health



While they may be older in years, senior pets still have so much love to give. What's more, that love is medically proven to benefit your own health. Today, and thanks to ongoing advances in modern veterinary medicine (and savvy pet owners who realize the importance of regular preventative care), pets are living longer and healthier lives than ever—many well into their teens! This month's newsletter is dedicated to our older pets and to ensuring their best health throughout their golden years. Additionally, November is the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals www.aspca.org (ASPCA®) and Petfinder.com's "Adopt-A-Senior Pet Month," so we'll address the many benefits of adding an older pet to your family.

Because we truly care about our patients, our veterinary team emphasizes regular wellness exams and preventative care as the keys to realizing your pet's best health. As we've shared in past newsletters, pet aging varies and is often dependent on size, breed and even lifestyle. Cats and small dogs can be considered geriatric at age seven and big dogs at age six. This is why your veterinarian may conduct blood work for pets older than five.

Inside a senior wellness exam

Your veterinarian will conduct a complete health history by interviewing you about your pet, along with conducting a physical exam. They will look at your pet's eyes, ears, and mouth, listen to their heart and lungs and examine their internal organs and muscles, by way of touch. Next, your vet will run their hands over your pet's body, checking for the overall health of their skin and coat. A blood chemistry test will likely be taken. In many circumstances, a blood test can paint a virtual picture of your pet's health and can be extremely useful when they've been conducted regularly over time.

What can senior pet owners do?

We recommend that pet parents be aware of any changes in a pet's behavior, bathroom habits, appetite or appearance. Even an increase in

drinking or urination can be worth mentioning to your veterinarian. If you notice any of these changes, use your best common sense, as it may be worth contacting your veterinarian.

Finally, just like humans, pets thrive in loving and safe homes. A warm, comfortable bed and a happy environment go a long way when it comes to improving the longevity and happiness of a beloved pet's life.

How four-legged companions can benefit your own health

The ASPCA estimates 1,540,385 dogs and 1,725,000 cats live in New York City, potentially proving that companionship is one of the top benefits of pet ownership. The sense of having a friend to share life's challenges with provides comfort to so many people, especially older adults. Pets keep us company and can offer love and entertainment. Small pets can make great travelers, offering companionship on the go. According to a recent study posted on petfinder.com, in 75% of the nation's dog-owning households, dogs are treated to rides in the family car. Pets can curb loneliness, often giving people a reason to go out and be active. Pets who need outdoor activity can open new doors for people by keeping them connected to social groups and activities. Pets make great icebreakers for meeting new people, even on a walk down the block or during a romp at the dog park.

Caring for a pet can create a healthy sense of purpose and regular physical routine for humans. Making sure pets receive enough exercise can result in pet owners getting exercise too. Being in a routine with your pet can bring structure and fitness into your own life.

No matter what the reason for adding a pet to your home, making a commitment to care for another life can bring a sense meaning and is often said to be one of the most positive decisions a person can make.

The Many Benefits of Adopting a Senior Pet

An older pet can often be the perfect choice for a family wanting to add a pet or for an individual seeking companionship. November

is officially the ASPCA® and Petfinder.com's "Adopt-A-Senior Pet Month" and they are encouraging people to consider adopting a senior pet by offering the following benefits:

- In many cases, these pets have already been trained.
- There have been tremendous advances in pet products and services that not only make caring for an older pet easier, but in many cases, can help to extend their lives.
- Older pets have a huge advantage over puppies and kittens, simply because of their maturity level, states the ASPCA.
- Older pets can be like people — they've been around the block and their energy level is a lot more stable.
- An older pet can be less high-maintenance than a puppy or kitten and can be left alone for longer periods of time.
- Their personalities are already formed, and what you see is what you get. Puppies and kittens are still forming their personalities.
- Mature pets may have been exposed to young children and likely know what to expect.
- Older dogs and cats need their exercise too. But like an older person, they've likely slowed down significantly and a nice, leisurely walk in the park may suit them just fine.

If you are considering adding a senior pet to your home, feel free to contact our veterinary team for advice at (212) 645-2767. We are happy to answer your questions.

