

# Sierra Animal Wellness Center

Specializing in Holistic, Integrative Veterinary  
Medicine



November 16, 2017



## Senior Pets: Good News/Bad News

Since November is National Senior Pet Month I decided to focus on our older furry friends. Just like us, our pets are naturally programmed to age. It is part of "the circle of life" if you will. The good news is that many modern advances in healthcare can increase life expectancy and perhaps more importantly, the quality of life. The bad news is that far too many pets don't benefit from those advances. According to the latest data only about 14% of senior animals undergo regular health screening.



I can't tell you the number of times I hear a dog or cat's guardian tell me their senior is fine, "just getting old". These are loving caring people who want the best for their animal friends. But here is the reality: According to an article by Michelle Fabiani, DVM, Diplomate ACVR, a recent university study looked at a group of dogs, age 9 or greater, and performed routine screenings. **The**

**shocking results:** veterinarians identified abnormalities in 80% of patients, with an average of 8 problems per dog detected. Serious and sometimes life threatening signs of age related disease (respiratory distress, increased thirst, and weight loss) were not noted by pet owners or were attributed to non-serious causes. In addition, signs of pain were not recognized, but 1 in 4 dogs in this study required pain medication.

To me, this indicates that we veterinarians need to do a better job of educating our

clients to:

- 1) recognize how critical senior wellness exams are, complete with bloodwork and any other indicated diagnostic testing;
- 2) know about the many affordable treatments and lifestyle modifications that can help a senior dog or cat live longer, more comfortable lives, and
- 3) recognize signs of trouble and pain. To see a list of potential signs of trouble in your senior, [click here](#).

**Wellness exams with regular bloodwork and diagnostics are critical!** They allow me or whoever your regular vet is, to compare current test results with past results and identify any changes that may need further investigation. We recommend a comprehensive blood panel with a CBC (complete blood count) when your dog or cat is middle aged. This will provide an excellent bench mark for comparing changes as your companion ages and help us detect diseases and conditions of aging early. A huge benefit of early detection of disease is that treatments are often more effective and less costly, and the quality of your pet's life can be maintained.

I believe that as committed lovers of our animal friends, you, our clients would much rather keep your pets in good health than try to return them to health after disease strikes. If I can keep your pet's care on the right track - such as by fine-tuning diet and exercise plans and preventing dental disease - I can help you give your pet additional years of good health. Even better, if I can catch something early on a diagnostic test, I can often treat that problem before it is too late.

Our mutual goal is to provide your pet with enhanced quality of life and longevity.

Until next time, be well.

- Dr. Peggy



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Monday, Thursday and Friday  
from 9:00 to 6:00

Tuesday from 9:00 to 3:00

Wednesday from 12:00 to 6:00

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