










Common Medical Conditions in Senior Pets

Health Category	Examples of Common Senior Diseases	Prevalence	Signs	If Left Untreated	Your Veterinarian May Recommend
 Dental	periodontal disease, gingivitis, cancer	85% of dogs and cats over 6 years of age	bad breath, redness in gums, swollen gums, mass	heart disease, tooth loss, kidney and liver disorder, systemic infection, cancer progression	oral exam preanesthetic bloodwork, * x-rays, biopsy, urinalysis
 Liver	inflammatory, degenerative and cancerous liver disease	common in older dogs, less common in cats, probably underestimated – data in process	decreased appetite, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, increased thirst/urination	hypoalbuminemia, lipid metabolism disturbance, anemia, bleeding disorders, liver failure	physical exam, bloodwork, *x-rays, ultrasound, urinalysis, urine culture
 Kidney	kidney failure, kidney stones, kidney infection, kidney insufficiency	10% dogs over age 12; 1% of all pets	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, bloodwork, *x-rays, ultrasound, urinalysis, urine culture
 Heart and Lungs	Cardiac disease, pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema	6.7% of all dogs; data in process for cats	decreased stamina, coughing, difficulty breathing, weight loss, pot belly	progression to kidney and liver disease, poor vascular perfusion, eventual death	chest x-rays, ECG, blood pressure, baseline bloodwork, *ultrasound, urinalysis
 Joints	arthritis, hip dysplasia, back disease	20% of adult dogs; lower in cats	lameness, reluctance to walk or exercise, decreased appetite, discomfort/pain	progressive disease, reduced mobility, neurological deficits	physical examination, bloodwork* (especially for fluid medications), Lyme test, x-rays, urinalysis, joint analysis
 Endocrine System	diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, hypoadrenocorticism, hyperadrenocorticism.	3% of cats and dogs; higher in older pets	noticeable weight change, increased appetite without weight gain, vomiting, increased water consumption, frequent urination, change in energy level	heart failure, kidney failure, secondary metabolic disease	bloodwork,* specific endocrine profile, urinalysis
 Cancer	Cancers of the skin, spleen, liver, lymphoid tissue, etc.	50% of pets over the age of 10	bleeding, lumps, irritated skin, identified mass, swollen lymph nodes, vomiting, diarrhea	can progress to organ failure or death	bloodwork, * physical exam, cytology, biopsy, urinalysis
 Ocular	cataracts, dry eye, glaucoma	many ocular diseases are inherited; often develops after 8 years of age	gray, bluish 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 bloodwork, * urinalysis
 Gastrointestinal Disease	Inflammatory bowel disease, pancreatitis, cancer, colitis	common among all cats and dogs; data in process	vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, fluid gain	further weight loss, disease will progress to potential death	bloodwork,* physical exam, urinalysis, x-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy, biopsy