

Tips For Keeping Your Geriatric Dog Happy

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Most dog owners are familiar with the term “senior” when it comes to describing their pet’s age, but as dogs are living longer thanks to advancements in veterinary medicine, a new term, “geriatric” is being used to classify older dogs. For the body sizes of 25#, 50#, and 100# in dogs, pets are considered geriatric at the ages of 13 years, 11, years, and 9 years respectively. Special considerations must be thought of to keep our geriatric pets healthy and comfortable as they advance in age.

Just as in humans, vision and hearing begin to decline in geriatric dogs. You may find that you dog does not greet you as regularly when you arrive home or is hesitant to move in dimly lit rooms. Leaving the furniture arranged as your pet is accustomed and keeping lamps on to light their paths at night is one way to help prevent falls and bruises from reduced vision. A gentle pat to wake your sleeping companion when you arrive home would be a kind way to say hello rather than trying to shout their name to come greet you.

The embarrassment of urine leakage is also something that geriatric dogs face as their urinary sphincter begins to weaken with age. One way of managing this is with a drug called Proin that helps to tighten urinary sphincter tone. This drug must be used cautiously in geriatric pets due to potential side effects, so an organ screening would need to be performed prior to or shortly after beginning the medication and then periodically throughout your dog’s life.

Finally, difficulty with rising from a sitting position and stiff joints are a very common problem in

geriatric pets, even the littler ones. Joint supplements containing glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate are the first line of defense against arthritis by keeping cartilage and joint fluid healthy. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs provide relief of arthritis pain and inflammation. Adding non-slip rugs help with slipping issues and re-usable bags can have their sides trimmed away to make a flat sling that can be placed under the lower back so that you have handles to help larger dogs with rising. Give us a call to describe this better or stop by and we'll show you how.

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