

Caring for an Older Pet

Just like people have different needs at different stages of life, so do dogs. When they age, they require more care. Responsible pet owners should take the lead in easing the aging process by promoting a healthy diet rich in vitamins, giving your pet regular exercise, and providing your dog with comfort. Many sources are available to help you prepare for life with an aging dog, like books, your veterinarian, and the Internet. You have no reason not to be ready! A good way to start planning is with your dog's diet. Again, just like people, food plays a huge role in determining your dog's quality of life. You should avoid foods with lots of protein (like meat), because they require more energy to digest. Choose foods that are low in protein and high in carbohydrates, which are better because they are a quick source of energy. When possible, choose whole grains. You may also supplement with goat's milk or green tea extract to promote health. Vitamins are crucial for supplying any missing nutrients, and for maintaining healthy organ function in general. Some of the key vitamins that older dogs need include DMG, EPA, DHA, Taurine, L-Glutamine, alpha lipoic acid, grape seed, and milk thistle. Check the ingredients list to make sure these vitamins, which promote healthy immune systems and support the functioning of the heart, liver, eyes, and brain, are included. You should also talk to your veterinarian to get custom recommendations. Exercise is critical for a healthy pet at every age! Even your older dog will still love to play fetch, and it's easy to find the time to play in the backyard or nearby park. If your dog is arthritic, ask your veterinarian for alternative ways to get exercise. Dogs need emotional and psychological support as well as physical as they age. They sometimes want to be treated with more luxury than young dogs. An easy way to do this is to buy a bigger, softer bed, which places less strain on their joints. Make sure your aging dog gets plenty of sleep - at least 10 hours every day. Your dog is a member of your family, and deserves to be treated like one, even as they age. Preparing to care for an aging dog can be a great experience and a good way to educate your family. Proper care can ensure that you have a healthy, happy relationship for years to come.

About the Author

Ian Spellfield, an occasionally frustrated pet owner, tests and reviews cat urine removal products at his blog [Urine Off Reviews](http://www.urineoffreviews.com). You can follow his reviews and occasional heartache at <http://www.urineoffreviews.com>

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