



It can be hard to watch a canine friend grow older. However, old age doesn't mean quality of life has to change.

Here are some simple things you can do to help your "young at heart" dog live their best life as a senior.

## **Health and Quality of Life: Special Care for Senior Dogs**

If your pup has entered their "golden years," you may be interested to learn about the best way to care for them.

While senior dogs may need lifestyle changes due to arthritis and other age-related conditions, they can still enjoy a great quality of life.

Below, you'll find three tips to help your senior pup be the best version of themselves.

### **At What Age is a Dog a "Senior?"**

This depends on your individual pup, activity level and their overall health.

On average, large and giant breed dogs have shorter lifespans than smaller breeds—and therefore, big dogs age faster, too.

Large breeds are generally considered seniors at 6-7 years of age, medium-sized dogs at 8-9 years, and small dogs at 10-12 years.

That doesn't necessarily mean your pup will act differently when they reach that age—it just means their bodies are undergoing certain changes that can affect their metabolism, mobility, and nutritional needs.

### **Should I Be Concerned If My Dog is a Senior?**

Not necessarily, many senior dogs are in tip-top shape and act as if they are still puppies!

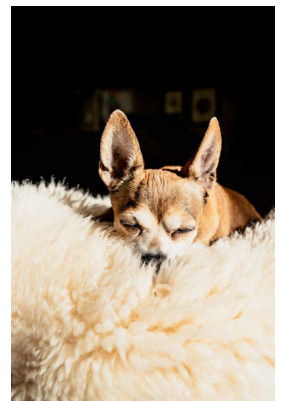
However, just like with human beings, advanced age can increase the chances of certain health conditions. This includes digestive issues, internal organ problems, cancers, and more.

Plus, even in otherwise-healthy older dogs, the body goes through certain changes with age, including:

- Arthritis, which can cause pain and mobility issues
- A slower metabolism and weight (fat) gain
- Muscle loss
- Cognitive dysfunction

Similar to dementia, cognitive dysfunction can cause forgetfulness, confusion, wandering at night, and house soiling.

Fortunately, there are some ways to help your senior pup stay as healthy and vibrant as possible.

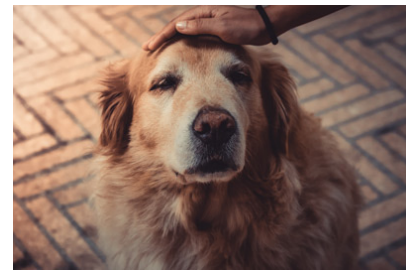


## Tip 1: Keep Up with Routine Veterinary Care

For senior dogs—especially pups with pre-existing health conditions—frequent checkups may be recommended.

This helps to catch and address developing health problems early on, when those conditions are simpler (and less expensive) to treat.

Additional tests, such as bloodwork or x-rays, may be recommended to provide more information about your pup's health status.



## Tip 2: Try These Simple Home Care Ideas

In addition to regular checkups, there are some things you can do at home for a senior dog, especially for dogs with arthritis:

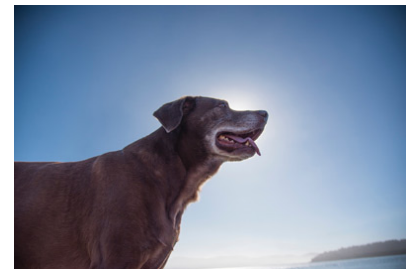
- Provide stairs or a ramp to help your pet get onto high surfaces like the bed, couch, or car seat (jumping becomes more difficult with age).
- Place non-slip mats on slick floor surfaces (tile, wood, etc.).
- Encourage your dog to stay active and enjoy their favorite activities. Moderate activity can help with physical and mental health.
- During walks, observe your dog carefully for signs of tiredness, and avoid temperature extremes (older dogs can't handle very hot or very cold temperatures as well as younger dogs).
- Offer a padded dog bed, ideally one with breathable fabric so it doesn't get too hot.

## Tip 3: Consider a Senior Diet

One really easy and valuable thing you can do at home is to feed a senior diet.

Senior dog foods are specially designed for older dogs. The benefits include:

- Lower caloric density. Since seniors have slower metabolisms, this formulation allows them to eat more and feel full, without gaining weight and while still receiving the proper balance of all other nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.
- Muscle maintenance. High-quality protein is important for maintaining muscle mass, but it must be present in the right proportion in the diet. Look for a complete and balanced diet, with a high-quality protein source.
- **Digestive balance.** Older dogs may be more prone to digestive issues, including constipation. Having the right fiber balance—along with probiotics and prebiotics—can help with these issues.
  - **Supplementation.** Senior dogs may benefit from certain supplements, including...
    - Glucosamine and chondroitin for joint health.
    - Omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA) for decreased inflammation, improved cell membranes, and brain health.
    - Antioxidants for brain/cognitive function.



Sometimes these are included in the food—while in other cases, you are able to supplement them separately.

Remember, every dog is an individual!

Some dogs lose weight with advanced age, rather than gaining weight. Some dogs with conditions, such as heart or kidney disease, may need prescription diets with very restricted levels of sodium or phosphorus. Still other senior dogs do just fine on the diet they've eaten their whole life.

The moral of this story is: for many senior dogs, a senior diet is a great choice.

When you're proactive about your older dog's needs and wellbeing, they could continue to enjoy a great quality of life—with plenty of cuddling on the couch and greeting you at the door with a wagging tail—for years to come.



From our family to yours,  
**Fromm Family Pet Food**