

# St Bernards Buzz

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Brrrr..... Winter is here! Now is the time for us to snuggle up in front of the heater wearing our dressing gowns and uggs whilst sipping on a warm hot chocolate or beverage of choice. Sounds perfect doesn't it?! .....but we can't forget about our fur babies outside and especially our senior ones. If you're feeling the cold, there is a good chance your fur baby is too! Ensure they get the TLC they need this winter.

## Is Your Pet "Over the Hill"?

The thought might not have even crossed your mind....**but could your pet be starting to show his age?**

Most people are not aware that cats and dogs are generally considered 'senior' after the age of about 8 years. Whilst the majority of our furry friends don't show ANY signs of slowing down at this age, there are a few things you need to watch out for.

Obvious changes might include grey hairs around the muzzle, the occasional accident around the house, hearing loss or stiff legs and difficulty jumping. Beyond the changes you can see, there can be a slowing metabolism and changing of nutritional requirements. **So if you have a senior pet, it's important to arrange more regular check-ups with us.** We will watch for trends in your pet's weight, check they don't have sore joints and examine them for new lumps or bumps. A thorough dental check, eye check and heart check is also important for a senior pet.



We may also suggest blood tests, urine tests and blood pressure measurements to make sure that, internally, all is going along nicely.

**If you have a senior pet call us and arrange a check-up today – we can help your pet live a longer and healthier life.**

## Three Common Senior Pet Questions

### 1. CAN MY PET GET DEMENTIA?

Yes – we now know that, like humans, dogs and cats can suffer from dementia. Common signs include becoming lost in usual familiar surroundings, loss of toilet training, trouble finding doors and stairways, sleep disturbances at night, separation anxiety and staring at walls. We can help you support your pet through this – just ask us for more information.

### 2. CAN I STILL EXERCISE MY PET AS HE GETS OLDER?

Yes – consistency is the key and this will keep him mobile and lean. Don't overdo it and avoid repetitive exercises such as throwing the ball twenty times over as this can place added stress on joints. We can advise you on an exercise regime for your senior pet.

### 3. DO I NEED TO CHANGE MY PET'S DIET AS HE GETS OLDER?

Yes – senior pets need a well-balanced diet that is generally lower in calories, but still has adequate protein, fat and fibre. Some pets will require diets high in essential fatty acids for arthritis support. We are the best place to seek advice when it



## Patient of the Month Pirate



Meet Pirate, the almost 12 year old Mastiff cross who came into the clinic because his owner had noticed that he seemed painful in his right hind leg especially after going for a walk. After an examination and X-rays, Pirate was diagnosed with hip dysplasia in both hips; a deformity of the hip joint that occurs during an animal's growth period. Put simply, the ball of the femur does not fit properly into the hip socket. He was also diagnosed with advanced secondary arthritis which is a disease process that occurs within the joints. Pirate's owner was already doing a terrific job in keeping Pirate comfortable; he has completed his course of Zydax injections, taking supplements regularly and an anti-inflammatory for daily relief. We look forward to seeing Pirate in 6 months for his wellness check-up.



## Fleas Love Winter

Flea eggs require a warm temperature to hatch so if you've turned the heating on to keep warm you might have turned on flea hatching too!

**IT'S SUPER IMPORTANT TO APPLY FLEA TREATMENT ALL YEAR ROUND.**