

St Bernards Buzz

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 6 JUNE 2021



Caring for a Senior Pet

You might not realize it, but dogs and cats are considered senior citizens when they reach 8 years of age. Our furry senior friends require some extra special attention to keep the happy and healthy.

A few of our top tips for senior care:

1. A regular health check is essential for your aging friend. Much can change over a year (equivalent to 6-8 years in human years) and a check-up twice a year will help us pick up on any changes. This will allow us to initiate a treatment plan, such as pain relief for arthritis.
2. Develop a keen eye for changes such as fluctuations in weight, appetite, thirst and urination. The presence of a cough, a change in sleeping habits, stiff joints and accidents around the house can be a sign of underlying illness.
3. Diet: Our aging pets have changing nutritional requirements. We recommend you feed your senior a complete and balanced premium food suitable for a mature pet.
4. Lumps and bumps: Run your hands over your pet every week and feel for the presence of any lumps or bumps. If you find anything new or unusual, arrange a lump check with us as soon as possible.

Senior Wellness Checks - \$20 Discount

We're offering a \$20 discount off the price of comprehensive blood testing for our seniors who visit for a wellness check during June!

Senior pets are all pets over 7 years old. As we learn more about the best way to look after our pets and with improved nutrition, pets are now living much longer, healthier lives. But, just as for humans, age does creep up on them too. You may notice your once-frisky pet seems to have slowed down a bit. Being aware of the natural changes that can occur as your pet reaches his or her golden years, as well as what you can do to help keep your pet as healthy, active and comfortable as possible, can ensure that you both enjoy your pet's life to the fullest. When a vet examines an animal, they look at, and feel the animal's body from the outside, but they can't see into the inside. **One of the simplest ways to monitor a patient's health on the inside is with blood testing.** Blood tests can show how well the organs are functioning and can pick up subtle changes that might indicate a disease is developing. This becomes especially important as an animal gets older.

Phone us if you have any questions about your senior pet, as we will be able to give you the best advice. 8364 4545

Patient of the Month

Rupert



Our special patient this month is Rupert – a very handsome older man who possibly has some oriental blood in his family tree. Rupert visited us last year because his family had noticed that he had lost some weight and was sleeping a lot. We ran some blood tests and found that Rupert was hyperthyroid, which explained his weight loss.

The thyroid gland produces hormones which run our metabolism – when we produce too much thyroid hormone our metabolism speeds up causing weight loss with a ravenous appetite, and high blood pressure among other things.

We started Rupert on some oral medication to reduce his thyroid function. The challenge with managing these patients with long term medication is that the disease is progressive and worsens with time requiring higher and higher doses of medication. Rupert's family decided that the best option for Rupert's long-term health and well-being was to refer him for Radioactive Iodine Therapy. The radioactive iodine targets the thyroid gland and reduces the production of thyroid hormones permanently. The treatment is intensive for a 10-day period, but the likely outcome is that the patient is cured – and that is exactly what has happened for Rupert.

He has put on 2kg and is back to being a happy and healthy mature cat who is running the household again. His recent blood tests were fabulous, and his family are thrilled with the results of the Radioactive Iodine Therapy.

You rock Rupert!

