

PINNACLE PEAK ANIMAL HOSPITAL

WELLNESS CHECK-LIST FOR SENIOR CANINES - "SENIOR AT SEVEN"

"Senior at Seven" is a common guideline for our canine friends. Although your dog may still act like a young, healthy pet well into his or her teens, there are subtle changes in body condition, elimination habits, eating patterns, activity and behavior that may occur as your dog ages. These changes might signal the beginning of health problems that can affect the older dog. Recognizing and reporting these signs as soon as they are observed will allow our Pinnacle Peak Animal Hospital team to treat conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, hypothyroidism, kidney disease, diabetes, Cushing's and Addison's diseases, obesity, anorexia, dental disease and cancer at an early stage. Your close observation of your pet, semi-annual, comprehensive physical examinations and a yearly Senior Wellness Screen for all dogs seven years of age and older are the best tools available to discover and treat diseases that could affect our senior dogs. By identifying these changes and their causes, we can work together towards our goal of helping our beloved dogs enjoy many long and comfortable senior years.

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN THE SENIOR DOG

****DENTAL/ORAL**

Note and report any strong odor from the mouth. Observe your dog at the food bowl and note any difficulty in eating or reluctance to chew hard food. Check your dog's teeth and gums on a regular basis and report any redness in the gums, bleeding or obvious tartar or staining of the teeth.

****DECREASED APPETITE/WEIGHT LOSS**

All changes in eating habits and any weight loss should be reported. A decreased appetite can be a sign that a health problem exists in your dog.

****OBESITY**

If your senior dog becomes more sedentary and starts to gain weight, a diet change to facilitate a return to optimum weight may be called for.

****INCREASED URINATION**

Observe your dog's urinations regularly and report any consistent, increased frequency or volume of urination.

****INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION**

Be aware, on a daily basis, of the amount of water your dog consumes. Any change in water consumption should be brought to our attention.

****DECREASED ACTIVITY**

Let us know if your dog's activity level decreases and he or she is not walking, running jumping or playing as in the past.

****VOMITING/DIARRHEA**

If your dog is vomiting or has diarrhea on a regular basis, these signs should be reported.

****BREATHING DIFFICULTIES**

Any sustained breathing difficulties such as coughing, panting, gasping, open-mouth breathing, rapid breathing or any other change from normal breathing patterns should be reported immediately.

****CHANGES IN COAT/SKIN**

Observe and report any changes in your dog's coat or skin or any lumps and bumps you find that weren't present in the past or that have changed in appearance.

****GENERAL BEHAVIORAL CHANGES**

If you notice any sustained change in your dog's normal behavior, notify the Pinnacle Peak Animal Hospital team immediately. It could signal health problems that need to be addressed.