

## PINNACLE PEAK ANIMAL HOSPITAL

### WELLNESS CHECK-LIST FOR SENIOR FELINES - "SENIOR AT SEVEN"

"Senior at Seven" is a common guideline for our feline friends. Although your cat 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 cat ages. These changes might signal the beginning of health problems that can affect the older cat. 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, high blood pressure, hyperthyroidism, chronic renal insufficiency, diabetes, 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 cats seven years of age and older are the best tools available to discover and treat diseases that could affect our senior cats. By identifying these changes and their causes, we can work together towards our goal of helping our beloved cats enjoy many long and comfortable senior years.

#### SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN THE SENIOR CAT

##### \*\*INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION

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

##### \*\*INCREASED URINATION

If you use "clumping" litter, note if the size of the urine clumps are consistently larger than they used to be. If you use clay litter, note if the box is consistently wetter than it was in the past.

##### \*\*DENTAL/ORAL

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

##### \*\*WEIGHT LOSS OR DECREASED APPETITE

All changes in eating habits and any weight loss should be reported. Sometimes cats with serious medical conditions will eat very well but continue to lose weight.

##### \*\*OBESITY

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

##### \*\*VOMITING

If your cat is vomiting on a regular basis or if he or she starts to have frequent hairballs, 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.

**\*\*DECREASED ACTIVITY**

Be aware if your cat's activity level decreases and he or she does not jump and play as in the past.

**\*\*CHANGES IN COAT/SKIN**

Observe and report any changes in your cat'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 cat's normal behavior, notify the Pinnacle Peak Animal Hospital team immediately. It could signal health problems that need to be addressed.