



Understanding Changes in Your Senior Dog

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As your dog enters their senior years, you may notice changes in how they look, move, eat, and behave. These changes are a normal part of aging—but they're also important to watch for. Some changes might just be part of growing older, while others could signal that your dog needs extra support or a checkup. This guide will help you recognize what to look for and when to reach out to our team at Foxmoor Animal Hospital.

Mobility Changes

You might notice your senior dog moving a bit slower, having trouble getting up from a nap, or not jumping on furniture like they used to. They may limp occasionally or seem stiff, especially when they first wake up. Arthritis and joint wear are common in older dogs and can make movement uncomfortable.

What you can do: Keep their bed in a warm, easy-to-reach spot. Help them up or down stairs if needed. Low-impact exercise, like short, gentle walks, can help keep their joints flexible. Ask our team about supplements or other options that might ease discomfort.

Weight Loss

Some older dogs naturally lose weight as their metabolism changes and they eat a bit less. But weight loss can also happen suddenly or become noticeable over a few weeks. This can be caused by dental problems, difficulty swallowing, less appetite, digestive changes, or sometimes a health condition that needs attention.

What you can do: Feed smaller, more frequent meals if your dog seems less interested in eating at once. Try softer food if they have dental trouble. Make sure they stay hydrated. If weight loss is sudden or your dog seems unwell otherwise, schedule a checkup with us.

Behavioral Changes

Older dogs may become quieter and less playful, sleep more, or seem confused at times. You might notice they get startled easily, act anxious, or seem disoriented—especially at night. They may also become more clingy or less social. These changes can happen gradually as their minds age, or they may signal pain, hearing loss, or other issues affecting how your dog feels.

What you can do: Keep their routine predictable and stable. Use a calm voice and move slowly around them, since vision and hearing may be declining. Spend quiet time together and don't force them to play if they're not interested. If their behavior changes suddenly or dramatically, a vet visit is a good idea to rule out other causes.



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Skin and Coat Changes

You may notice your senior dog's coat becoming duller, thinner, or grayer. Their skin might become drier, flakier, or more sensitive. They may scratch more than they used to, or their fur might not grow back as quickly if they have a patch of missing hair. Senior skin needs extra care since it's thinner and more fragile than younger skin.

What you can do: Brush them gently and regularly to keep their skin stimulated and catch any lumps or sores early. Ask about a senior-friendly shampoo if their skin is dry. Check their ears and paws regularly. If you notice persistent itching, sores, or bumps that seem new, let us know at your next visit.

Eating and Drinking Changes

Your older dog may drink more water than they used to, or seem less interested in food. They might eat more slowly, leave food in their bowl, or be pickier about what they eat. Some senior dogs eat the same amount but get full faster. Changes in drinking can point to diabetes, kidney issues, or other health concerns—so it's worth paying attention to.

What you can do: Always have fresh water available and take note of how much they're drinking. If thirst increases noticeably, mention it at a checkup. Offer softer, easier-to-chew foods if they have dental issues. Some senior dogs do better with a diet made for older dogs. If eating or drinking habits change suddenly, schedule a visit with our team.

Potty Changes

Senior dogs may need to go outside more often, have less control of their bladder or bowels, or have accidents in the house. Their poop may become softer, harder, or irregular. These changes can happen because their muscles weaken, they drink more, or their digestive system slows down. Accidents inside don't mean they're being bad—they usually can't help it.

What you can do: Take them out more frequently, especially right after meals and before bedtime. Be patient and kind if accidents happen—punishing them will only cause stress. Note any changes in what their poop looks like or how often they go. If they strain to go, can't seem to go, have diarrhea that lasts more than a day, or have frequent accidents, call us for advice.

When to Call Us

Some senior changes are just part of aging, but some need professional attention. Please reach out to Foxmoor Animal Hospital if you notice:

- Sudden weight loss or loss of appetite
- Big changes in how much they drink



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- Difficulty walking, paralysis, or severe limping
- Confusion, disorientation, or sudden behavioral shifts
- Difficulty breathing or coughing
- Vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than a day
- Straining to urinate or defecate, or unable to go
- Lumps, sores, or severe itching
- Any change that worries you—even if you're not sure why

Senior Wellness Checks

We recommend bringing senior dogs in for a checkup at least twice a year. These visits let us catch health issues early and make sure your dog is comfortable. Our team can talk with you about diet, exercise, pain management, and other ways to support your older friend through this stage of life.

Your senior dog may be slowing down, but they still have so much love to give. With a little extra attention and regular visits to our team, we can help keep them comfortable, healthy, and happy for as long as possible. If you have questions about your dog's aging or notice anything that concerns you, give us a call at 1-609-426-0155 or email info@foxmooranimalhospital.com. We're here to help.