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Welcome To Your Senior Cat

Once our cats reach the age of 10 we consider them to be a senior. Some cats, due to breed or individual needs are considered seniors at younger ages. Seniors are wonderful- they love to nap and are not as rowdy as a younger cat. Owning a senior cat has a different set of responsibilities when compared to a younger feline friend. **Our monitoring recommendations for a senior cat include:**

- **Twice a year physical exams-** we like to keep closer tabs on our seniors including their weight. Twice yearly exams for cats is comparable to a human going to the doctor every two to four years.
- **Blood pressure twice a year -** senior cats are prone to developing hypertension (or high blood pressure). While some people notice changes in their cat with hypertension we can have asymptomatic patients. Uncontrolled blood pressure increases the risk of seizures, blindness, and organ damage.
- **Yearly blood work and urinalysis-** as our cats age the risk for multiple diseases (such as hyperthyroidism, kidney disease, and diabetes) increases. Ideally we like to start blood work when our patients are healthy to establish a nice base line. Yearly blood work is important even if no clinical signs are noticed as up to 17% of apparently health cats have underlying diseases.

At home there are changes you can do to make your senior cat more comfortable. **Changes at home include:**

- **Adding water stations away from food** to encourage your cat to drink more (this can be a benefit at any age).
- **Making favorite resting locations easily accessible-** this may include adding ramps or steps for older cats who have a hard time jumping due to arthritis.
- **Heat support in beds-** if your senior cat has a favorite bed to sleep in this can help arthritic seniors especially in the winter.
- **Adding lower lipped litter boxes-** some of our senior cats have a hard time getting into and out of the litter box. Creating a box with a lower lipped entrance can be helpful. Additionally making sure to have a litter box on every level of the house is critical. Adding more boxes per cat is recommended as seniors urinate more and the litter gets soiled faster.

Things can change very quickly with our seniors. **If you notice these changes at home** please either call us to discuss further or schedule an appointment for your cat. This list is not complete! **Any change in a senior should prompt contact with us.**

- **Increased vocalization-** can be a sign of hyperthyroidism or hypertension (high blood pressure)- schedule an appointment.
- **Increased thirst/urination-** can be a sign of multiple diseases- schedule an appointment.
- **Increased appetite-** commonly with some metabolic diseases- schedule an appointment.
- **Decreased appetite -** commonly seen with multiple diseases- schedule an appointment.
- **Dry/hard stool-** constipation is a common sequel to multiple diseases. We may need to see your cat. Depending on when your cat was last seen/your cats blood work recommendations can sometimes be made over the phone.
- **Change in movement/jumping ability-** this can be a sign of arthritis among other things. Please call or schedule an appointment.
- **Change in litter box usage-** this can be a sign of arthritis, urinary tract infection, urinary bladder stone, GI diseases, etc. Please schedule an appointment.