

Mature Pet (7+ Years) Packet Introduction

Contained in this packet is information necessary for every pet owner, new or experienced. Even if you are a seasoned pet owner, it is always helpful to have resources available for any questions you may have after your dog or cat's first "mature adult" visit. The first mature adult visit can be overwhelming because you receive a lot of information about the changes your pet is going through and often we find you think of lots of questions after you leave!

I hope that this packet will be a simple, comprehensive starting point for you on your pet's continued health and wellness adventure. Please read through all of the information contained and let us know if you have any questions. We are all here to be your partner and support in your pet's lifetime health and wellness journey.

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Mature (7-12 years) & Super Senior (13+ Years) Pet Assessment (DISHAA)

DISHAA is a tool to help the pet owner and veterinarian assess mental acuity in your dog (it was originally designed for dogs but can be used to monitor a cat's cognition as well), and for the veterinarian to diagnose or monitor Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS). You should complete this assessment before every doctor's visit after your dog (or cat) has reached a certain age. Simply fill out the form at home and bring it with you to your appointment. Even if your pet is not showing any overt symptoms now, it is a great tool to help monitor changes in your pet's behavior over time.

DISHAA stands for Disorientation, Interactions (Social), Sleep Cycles, Housesoiling, Anxiety, & Activity.

Behavioral Signs <i>Identify signs that have arisen or progressed since 8 years of age and older.</i> Score as 0=none, 1=mild, 2=moderate, 3=severe.	Score
DISORIENTATION	
Gets stuck, difficulty getting around objects, goes to hinge side of the door	
Stares blankly at walls, floor, or into space	
Does not recognize familiar people/familiar pets	
Gets lost in home or yard	
Less reactive to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli	
INTERACTIONS (SOCIAL)	
More irritable, fearful, aggressive with visitors, family, or other animals	
Decreased interest in approaching, greeting, or affection/petting	
SLEEP/WAKE CYCLES	
Pacing/restless/sleeps less, waking at night	
Vocalization at night	
HOUSE-SOILING, LEARNING & MEMORY	
Less able to learn new tasks or respond to previously learned commands/name/work	
Indoor soiling of urine_____ or stool_____/ decreased signaling to go out	
Difficulty getting dog's attention/increased distraction/decreased focus	

ACTIVITY	
Decrease in exploration or play with toys, family members, other pets	
Increased activity including aimless pacing or wandering	
Repetitive behaviors, e.g. circling____, chewing____, licking____, star gazing____	
ANXIETY	
Increased anxiety when separated from owners	
More reactive/fearful to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli	
Increased fear of places/locations (e.g. new environment/going outdoors)	
TOTAL	

A score of 4-15 is consistent with mild CDS, 16-33 is moderate, and >33 is severe CDS.

Vaccination for Mature (7+ Years) Dogs & Cats

The cornerstone of preventative care in cats and dogs is vaccination. Mature pets should be seen 2 to 4 times per year, with their vaccinations spread out across each visit. Not all pet’s follow the same vaccine schedule and your pet’s personalized schedule will be based on multiple factors (like their lifestyle and environment at home).

Vaccines are organized in two categories: “core” and “non-core” (AKA Lifestyle) vaccines. Core vaccines are what we consider to be required for all pets regardless of their lifestyle; whereas, non-core vaccines are based on the pet’s lifestyle and environment and are given in addition to core vaccines.



Dogs		Cats	
Core Vaccines	Lifestyle Vaccines	Core Vaccines	Lifestyle Vaccines
Rabies Bordetella Distemper Adenovirus Parvovirus Parainfluenza	Leptospirosis Lyme Influenza H3N8 & H3N2	Rabies Rhinothacheitis Calicivirus Panleukopenia	Leukemia

Rabies is a core vaccine for both dogs and cats. It is also required by law in Clermont County. Dogs and cats can be vaccinated for rabies any time after 16 weeks of age. Most adult pets receive a rabies vaccine once every 3 years.

In dogs, the lifestyle vaccines are **leptospirosis**, **Lyme**, and both strains of **canine influenza**. We recommend lepto and Lyme to any dog that will spend time outdoors and that are also exposed to ticks (which, in reality in this area is almost every dog since Lyme is now endemic to the region & lepto is spread via the urine of wild animals). Influenza is recommended for any dog that will be in a social setting (boarding/daycare, grooming, parks, apartment buildings/ other community buildings, training, agility, etc.) as it is a highly contagious upper respiratory disease spread between dogs.



In cats, the only lifestyle vaccine is **leukemia**. We do recommend a leukemia series for all cats under 1 year of age; however, adult cats only need it if they are outdoors and interacting frequently with unfamiliar neighborhood cats. We also recommend it for mixed cat households where some cats are exclusively indoors while others may go in and out, potentially exposing their furry roommates to disease.

- **Rabies** is given every 3 years to most adult pets. (Some states require rabies vaccination once per year, so if your pet travels with you they may be required to receive it more frequently).
- **Distemper-Adenovirus-Parvovirus** (often a combination vaccine) is given annually in dogs that do not receive a bordetella vaccination. It is given every 3 years to dogs that do receive an annual bordetella vaccine as long as they receive their vaccines on time.
- **Leptospirosis & Lyme** (often a combination vaccine either as Lepto/Lyme or DAP+Lepto/Lyme) is always an annual vaccine.
- **Canine Influenza H3N8/H3N2** is always an annual vaccine.
- **Bordetella/Adenovirus/Parainfluenza** is an annual vaccine; however, some boarding and grooming facilities require it to be given every 6 months.
- **FVRCP** (a combination vaccine) is normally a biannual vaccine for adult cats.
- **Leukemia** is an annual vaccine for outdoor adult cats.

Along with vaccines, your pet will also receive an annual deworming. Please bring a fecal sample with you to your pet's wellness appointments so that we can also check for intestinal parasites that are not covered by a standard deworming treatment.

Veterinary Care After the Age of 7

Midlife to Mature Years (Seven to ten)

ANNUAL VISITS: These visits will now become more frequent as your pet should now be seen at least twice per year. Changing dietary and exercise needs will be discussed. Also, blood work should also be done at least twice per year to monitor liver, kidney, glucose levels, and more. This allows us to catch disease processes early and initiate treatment before an issue becomes severe.

ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL DENTAL CLEANING:

X-rays, tooth removal, periodontal treatments, and more will be included as needed.

NEW HEALTH CONCERNS: These usually start at this stage in your pet's life. Musculoskeletal issues, metabolic diseases, and skin disorders are just a few issues common to this age group. Long term medications may be started and at that time medication monitoring via blood or urine tests will be performed at least twice per year.



The Senior Years (Eleven to fourteen)

BI-ANNUAL VISITS & DIAGNOSTICS: Your pet will now be seen twice per year for an exam, blood work, urine checks, and possibly X-RAYS of the chest and abdomen. Appropriate immunizations, parasite control, and physical exams will be done. Dietary changes and weight control will be discussed.

NEW HEALTH CONCERNS: Arthritis, heart, liver, kidney function, and metabolic disease are common during this life stage. Long term and lifetime medications are often prescribed.

DENTAL HEALTH: Dental cleanings may need to be performed twice per year at this stage in order to prevent damage to the heart, liver, and kidneys.

The Super Senior Years (Fourteen & up)

HEALTH CARE VISITS: At this point health care visits of any type tend to occur at least three to five times per year. *Remember, dogs and cats age about seven times faster than we do.* Variable diagnostics based on individual needs will be done. This includes twice yearly blood profiles, X-RAYS, urine checks, and medication monitoring.

DIET: At this point it will be more than likely your dog or cat will be on a prescription diet.

NEW HEALTH CONCERNS: Cataracts, cognitive (brain) dysfunction, and urinary incontinence, to name a few.

Diet Recommendations for Mature Dogs & Cats

It can be hard to choose the right diet for your pet because there are so many options available, both over-the-counter (OTC) and via prescription. There is also a lot of marketing out there telling you what is “best” to feed your dog or cat that may be misleading or untrue (like dogs with food allergies needing a grain-free diet).



We recommend three diet lines as our top choices for pet food due to their long history of extensive research, trustworthy ingredients, and board certified veterinary nutritionists on staff that work on diet development and are always available to answer questions. Royal Canin, Purina Pro Plan Veterinary, and Hill’s Science Diet are all high quality lines that offer extensive options to cater to any pet’s dietary requirements, whether they be breed specific, life stage, or prescription.

So, what should you take into consideration when choosing a diet for your dog or cat?

Life Stage

Life Stage refers to the age of your pet. Puppies and kittens have different dietary requirements compared to adult and senior pets. Once your dog or cat is over 7 years of age you will want to transition them to a mature adult or senior labeled diet, assuming they are not already on a prescription diet for another health concern. In dogs without other issues, we recommend transitioning to Neurocare from Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets (Bright Mind is the OTC version) to help slow and prevent the signs of cognitive dysfunction.

Energy Level

A distinction often directly related to the pet’s life stage. You may see some diets listed as being for “sporting” or “working” dogs, meaning they may have more protein or are higher calorie diets. You will also see “indoor” formulas in cat foods. Overall, a high quality senior/mature adult diet is what is most important barring any other major health concerns.

Weight

For overweight or obese pets there are OTC and prescription diets available. One should not feed low calorie diets to underweight pets. As pets age they are more likely to gain weight due to reduced exercise (perhaps from arthritis or another ailment). However, do not reach straight for a weight loss diet for your senior pet without consulting with your veterinary team first to discuss a diet change. There could be other factors at play that need to be ruled out prior to lowering their calorie intake (like hypothyroidism, diabetes, etc.).



Health Concerns

Prescription diets are used for a myriad of health issues, and we will discuss your pet's needs regarding these diets when they are diagnosed. Prescription diets are available for urinary issues (crystals), weight management, kidney disease, liver disease, heart disease, stress and anxiety, allergies, dermatologic health, chronic gastrointestinal issues, and more. If your pet is prescribed a specific prescription diet you often cannot use an OTC diet to replace it. However, you can try a different brand of veterinary prescription diets if palatability becomes an issue.

Also, note that there is no reason to feed your dog or cat a grain-free diet. It is untrue that they are better for food allergies since 99% of food allergies are caused by the protein source in the diet. In addition, grain-free diets have been linked to a higher incidence of dilated cardiomyopathy in dogs.

Preventative Medicine

A high quality and appropriate diet can prevent health issues as your pet ages. Controlling your pet's weight can prevent complications from arthritis and diabetes as they age. Controlling allergies saves you money on treatments long term and your pet doesn't have to take as many medications. Slowing down the progression of kidney or liver disease allows them to live a longer, fuller life. Preventing the formation of urinary crystals saves you money on treatments and medications, and possibly prevents surgery in the event of a urinary blockage (which can be fatal, especially in male cats).

Pet Preference

We always take the pet's preference into account. You can definitely find a diet that can fit their needs, tastes, and your budget. When discussing a diet or diet changes, let staff know if your pet

likes dry food, canned food, or a combination. With cats, they should eat about 50% dry:50% wet, ideally. In addition, cats with kidney disease especially can have issues with appetite (dogs can do but it is less prevalent). In that case, just getting them to eat is paramount, regardless of if it is a prescription or senior diet.

Cost

Cost varies based on the quality of the diet, however, boutique diets are often expensive without reason. Prescription diets are more expensive than OTC diets due to the research and support behind the diets, as well as the ingredients and manufacturing practices used. Many “boutique” diet brands have not been around long enough to have the research behind their diets nor do they have veterinary nutritionists on staff.

Of the OTC diets, you do not have to go for the most expensive “boutique” diets, but you also shouldn’t reach for the cheapest bag you can find at the grocery store. Often, something in the mid-range of pricing is a perfectly good diet for your pet. Look for AAFCO approval on the diet if you aren’t sure on the quality. However, please also keep in mind that if your senior pet is put on a prescription diet for urinary issues, allergies, diabetes management support, liver and/or kidney disease, heart disease, or chronic gastrointestinal issues you will not be able to find anything OTC that is comparable.

If at any time you do have questions regarding your pet’s diet please do not hesitate to voice your questions and concerns to a staff member or the veterinarian during your bi-annual exam. We are also happy to assist you with a diet plan recommendation at any time throughout the year once their wellness exam is complete.

Supplements for Mature Dogs & Cats

The petcare market is saturated with a myriad of supplements that claim to do many things for your aging canines and felines. If you aren’t sure where to start, first check out the label (if you are just browsing online or in a petstore) and look for the National Animal Supplement Council NASC seal.

Manufacturers can obtain this certification by following a strict set of guidelines that includes inspections of their facilities and ingredients, which helps ensure you are purchasing a safe product.



As for supplements we will recommend, there may be a specific ailment your pet is diagnosed with that will require supplementation. Specific supplements will be discussed at diagnosis. If you want to start your pet on a preventative supplement we recommend the following:

- **TRP-TriCox Chews for dogs**- helps to slow the effects of arthritis, protects collagen in your dog's joints.
- **Composure Pro for dogs or cats**- helps with anxiety related to cognitive changes
- **Fortiflora Calming Care for dogs or cats**- helps with gut health related to anxiety
- **Vetriscience Senior & Immune Support for dogs or cats**- they have an array of products to choose from for general senior and immune health in older pets
- **Vetriscience Glycoflex for cats & Furball Pro**- helps with arthritis and hairballs in cats, respectively.

Age Related Changes



Many things will change as your pet ages and often the signs are subtle or hardly there at all. That is why more frequent examinations and diagnostics are recommended for pets as they mature. As they get older you will need to watch for vision and hearing loss, cognitive dysfunction, behavior changes, changes to their energy level, and difficulty moving/pain. When they come to see us for a check-up we will look for signs of all of the above as well as changes to the heart and lungs, orthopedic issues, and we will recommend diagnostics to check for thyroid, kidney, liver, and other issues that aren't visible to the naked eye.

Our Services

We offer a wide range of comprehensive pet health care services and we tailor each patient's treatment plan to their individual needs, from surgery to grooming to routine wellness visits. Below is a list of some of the services we offer:

At-Home Treatment Education

- Subcutaneous fluids administration
- Diabetic testing & insulin injections
- Daily oral & topical medication administration
- Ear cleaning & anal gland expression
- Bladder & bowel expression

In- House Blood-work & Diagnostics

- *All in-house blood test results can be obtained in less than 20 minutes.*
- Routine blood screenings
- Comprehensive Wellness profiles
- Blood Parasite Testing (Heartworm, Lyme, Ehrlichia, Anaplasmosis)
- Thyroid & Cholesterol levels
- Feline Leukemia & FIV testing
- Pancreatitis testing
- Complete Blood Counts
- Electrolyte Testing
- Urinalysis (Same Day Results)

Boarding

- Long-term to daycare options
- Purina Pro diet fed in-house
- Veterinarian in-house
- Staff able to accommodate any pet's needs
- Exclusive & private boarding for feline patients

Diagnostic Imaging

- Digital Radiology (results in minutes)
- Digital Fecal Exams for Parasites
- Same-Day Digital Cytology w/ Pathologist Consult

Urgent Care & Services

- Available during regular office hours

Grooming

Hospitalization & Patient Care

- Feline patients enjoy a completely separate treatment and hospitalization area from our canine patients to better aid in rest and recovery.

Pet Behavior Help

- Education on pet socialization & training
- Handouts, brochures, & literature written by our team
- Behavior consults and specialist referrals

Pharmacy

- Purina Pro Veterinary prescription diets
- Prescription medications (no need to visit the pharmacy after your pet's appointment!)
- Parasite Prevention for cats and dogs
- Dietary supplements
- Available in-house or online, allowing you access to a complete inventory 24/7
- Written prescriptions available upon request
- Partnerships with local compounding pharmacies for specialized medications

Preventative Care

- Annual & semi-annual wellness exams
- Parasite prevention
- Blood parasite testing and prevention
- Lyme testing and vaccination
- Flea & tick prevention
- Wellness blood screenings performed in-house
- Vaccinations
- Vaccine titer testing for dogs
- Genetic testing for dogs

Specialty Referrals

- Ohio State School of Veterinary Medicine
- CARE Center of Blue Ash
- Veterinary Oncology & Referral Center
- MedVet of Cincinnati

Surgery

- Soft tissue
- Orthopedic
- Routine wellness procedures
- Dentistry & Full Mouth Radiology

Pet Loss & Support

- Euthanasia services
- Angel Paws, hospice and at-home services
- Cremation services from Faithful Companion
- Pet Loss Support

Veterinary Cannabis Counseling

- Schedule a consult with our certified VCC to discuss cannabis for your pet

We are here to support and educate you, our client, in your quest to keep your pets happy & healthy. Do not hesitate to call us with questions or concerns anytime you need us.

Curious about a service you see here? Let us know! Our staff is happy to help in any way we can.