



# HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR CANINE COMPANION

## Fort Street Veterinarian



MTWF: 7:00am - 5:30pm  
TH: 7:00am - 8:00pm  
SAT: 8:00am - 12:00pm

**(402) 884-3383**

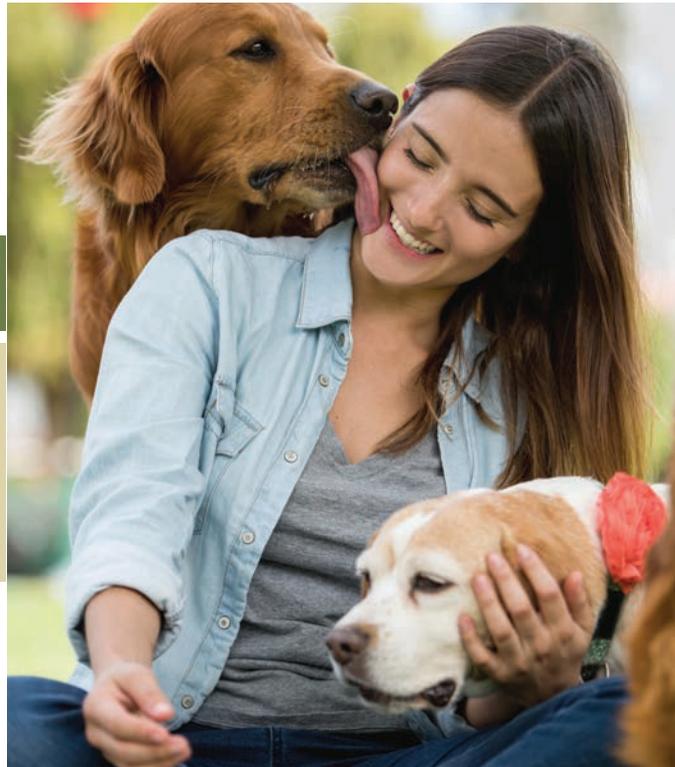
**www.fortstreetvet.com**

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\* Prices are approximate and are subject to change without notice at the discretion of the clinic. Packages are one per pet and are nontransferable. Additional restrictions may apply.



## 3 YEARS TO SENIOR YEARS

**Did you know that dogs age differently?** Breed and size both are factors. Smaller dogs usually live longer to about 15 - 20 years of age, while larger dogs usually live 12 - 15 years. Therefore, the age ranges presented in this pamphlet are approximate.

**Be assured** that whatever the kind or size of dog you have, all of us at Fort Street Veterinarian are dedicated to ensuring that you and your pet have as many happy and healthy years together as possible.



## PRIME WELLNESS APPROX. 3 - 6 YEARS

### PRIME EXAMS & VACCINATIONS:

- Dogs become socially mature during their prime years and keeping up with annual exams and vaccinations continues to be important and **required by law**.
- This is when most behavioral problems and behavior-related diseases become evident.
- Genetic-related problems will become clinically evident at about this age, and with your approval we may screen for any breed-specific issues.

### PRIME DENTAL:

During this life stage professional cleaning of your dog's teeth will be recommended because **proper dental care can add to your dog's life span**. Here are some indicators your pet has periodontal disease:

- Bad breath
- Reluctance to eat
- Drooling
- Flinching when touched near the mouth
- Blood in the water bowl or on toys
- Inflamed gums

The earlier it's identified and treated, the better for your dog and the less expensive for you!

### PRIME DIET:

- **Obesity peaks during this stage** and carries with it an increased risk for certain disorders and diseases.
- We'll continue to work with you to monitor and manage your dog's weight.
- If your pet is diagnosed with an illness, allergy or more, **we offer a host of prescription pet foods to support your pet's health**.

### PRIME EXERCISE:

- Keeping your dog active is ever more important as he or she ages. Daily walks are good for your pet as are games and fetching activities.
- Just as with diet, **exercise can prevent or delay chronic diseases** that require ongoing medications, care... and money.
- However, remember that some breeds don't do as well in hot or cold weather, and smaller dogs can't walk as far as larger ones. **We can discuss with you a good exercise program for your pet at his or her wellness exam.**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.fortstreetvet.com](http://www.fortstreetvet.com)**

**MATURE EXAMS & VACCINATIONS:**

- **Senior wellness exams twice a year may be recommended at this stage because 6 months of a dog's life equates to years in terms of lifespan.** Wellness screening (*blood work, urinalysis, thyroid level*) will be important to detect any subtle changes and early signs of age-related disease processes.
- **Mature dogs start to face an increased risk for diseases** such as hypothyroidism, diabetes, kidney disease, high blood pressure, and cancer. Subtle clinical signs should never be ignored, such as:
  - Vomiting (*even if only once weekly*)
  - Increased thirst
  - Hiding
  - Changes in coat
  - Changes in urination and/or defecation
- **As with humans, older dogs can begin to experience older eye issues** such as chronic dry eyes, cataracts and glaucoma. Blindness can result with the last two. That's why we may recommend eye testing that involves:
  - A **Schirmer Tear Test** to evaluate tear production.
  - An **Intraocular Pressure Test** to diagnose glaucoma as well as a variety of other eye conditions.
  - Both take only minutes to do, are painless and neither test requires anesthesia.

**MATURE DIET:**

Monitoring your pet's eating habits, appetite and weight becomes even more important as your dog matures.

- **Nutritional requirements change as his or her metabolic rate slows.** As a consequence, a lower calorie food may be needed at this stage.
- Nutritional supplements also may be suggested to help with joint health, heart health and more.
- Plus, various medical conditions may also require adjustments in your dog's diet.
- **Remember, too, that weight loss or gain, dehydration or increased thirst all can be indications of illness so be sure to contact us if you observe any such changes in your pet.**

**MATURE DENTAL:**

- **With every year, professional cleaning of your dog's teeth is more critical** because bacteria from tooth decay and gum disease can enter the blood stream and impact the heart, liver and kidneys.
- Broken and decaying teeth also can give your pet a great deal of pain without you knowing because animals instinctively hide pain and weakness.

**MATURE ENVIRONMENT & EXERCISE:**

- Exercise continues to be *important* but **tailor your dog's exercise needs to his or her physical condition as he or she ages.** Frequency is more important than intensity. Games and toys continue to be recommended but again, adjust duration of play to your pet's health.
- **Arthritis may become an issue as your pet matures.** If so, we may suggest a specific exercise program—in addition to pain meds and supplements—as well as Laser Therapy.
- **Laser Therapy is pain-free,** usually takes just minutes, and can help your pet with a host of aches and pains associated with arthritis and other ailments.



**SENIOR & GERIATRIC EXAMS & VACCINATIONS:**

- The "old pet" diseases mentioned previously become more of a risk in the senior and geriatric years. **Semi-annual examinations and diagnostics are essential** and depending on your pet's physical exam, further screening (*with radiography, electrocardiogram, etc.*) may also be recommended. Be assured that if such tests are suggested, we'll fully explain why and answer all questions.
- **Vaccinations** may need to be adjusted at this stage.

**SENIOR & GERIATRIC DIET & DENTAL:**

- While weight gain may have been a concern in previous years, **your aging pet may now be losing weight,** perhaps due to disease, loss of smell, taste or dental disease. We'll work with you to develop a diet your pet can consume and one that provides essential protein, fat and fiber.
- **Senior pets with specific illnesses** such as diabetes, also require special diets and again, we offer specifically formulated foods.
- Your pet should have access to **plenty of fresh water** because older pets require more.

**SENIOR & GERIATRIC ENVIRONMENT & EXERCISE:**

**Adapt your home environment** to the needs of your older pet:

- He or she may need easier access to food and water.
- A more cushiony and joint-supportive bed may provide some relief from arthritis.
- Older dogs' coats change as they age so regular brushing is suggested.
- Arthritic pets or those with other ailments may have trouble navigating stairs or getting in and out of a car so ramps may be needed.
- Exercise continues to be important but adapting to your pet's physical needs will be necessary. Frequency rather than intensity is key as is decreased duration.

**MONITORING QUALITY OF LIFE:**

At this stage, if your dog eats well, gets around fairly well, still seems happy or enthusiastic about being with you and about life in general, great.

**However, if you see signs of...**

- Diminished appetite or thirst
- Excessive panting
- A reluctance to be held or petted
- Lethargy or confusion
- Drooping head or tail

**...bring your pet in to see us.** There may be a health issue that can be addressed... or this may be the time to discuss end-of-life decisions. We'll give you a prognosis, answer all questions you may have and help you decide how to best help your beloved pet.



**DISCOUNTED WELLNESS PACKAGES**

For Your Senior Pet

**SAVE 44%!**\*

VERSUS COST OF INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

**BASIC SENIOR WELLNESS PACKAGE: \$177\***

**VALUE: \$255\* / SAVE \$78!\***

- **Comprehensive Senior Blood Work:** To evaluate organ and endocrine function, and for early detection of blood disorders, liver disease, renal disease, diabetes mellitus, adrenal dysfunction, and hypothyroidism.

- **Urinalysis and Sediment:** Urine is microscopically examined for certain chemicals and abnormalities
- Results used to evaluate hydration, kidney function, inflammation and infection.

**COMPLETE SENIOR WELLNESS PACKAGE: \$284\***

**VALUE: Approx. \$420\* / SAVE \$136!\***

**Our Basic Senior Wellness Package + Radiographs**

- Radiographs are used to look for anything abnormal in the abdomen, to assess the heart and lungs and to evaluate all of your pet's organs while also looking for signs of disease.
- It's a valuable tool used to screen for changes in the lungs, in diagnosing abnormal heart rhythms, identifying heart enlargement and in assessing the effects of drugs on the heart.

Your pet's welfare and your peace of mind are important to us. Never hesitate to ask any questions you may have at any time either during or after an appointment.

Contact: 402-884-3383 or staff@fortstreetvet.com.