

Pawsitive Press

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Creature Comforts

By: Michael D. Bartholomew, DVM, CVA, CVH, CVT, CVFT

Our canine and feline friends mean the world to us and we want to take care of them as best we can throughout their entire life. Inevitably, even though we all wish we could slow time, puppies turn into adult dogs and adult dogs turn into seniors. It is the same with our feline friends. I still remember my kittens sitting in my work boots when they were tiny—all you could see were their little heads poking out of the top—hard to believe they are now 15 years old! As our furry pals age, they can encounter issues which diminish their quality of life. No need to fear! There are many things we can do to help keep our pets feeling young.

Diet is a very important part of any pet's life. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, once said, "Let your medicine be your food and let your food be your medicine." As they age, many pets tend to gain weight which can contribute to various health issues including joint pain, cardiac disease, and diabetes. A healthy weight



for an arthritic pet lessens stress on the back and joints giving them more mobility and less pain. There are so many choices when it comes to your pet's diet and it can sometimes seem confusing. Our veterinarians can advise you on the most appropriate diet for your individual pet. In general, I recommend a high quality dry or canned food or home cooking (Home cooking should only be done under supervision of a veterinarian or a veterinary nutritionist). For cats, I especially like canned foods as they provide the extra moisture that cats need to maintain their health—especially in the urinary tract and kidneys. Some of the higher quality diets to look for include: Instinct, Merrick, Natural Balance, and Weruva. Our veterinarians can also guide you if your pet needs a special diet due to health issues.

As part of the therapy used for arthritic pets, supplements can be included to decrease inflammation and promote joint health. A popular joint supplement, Glyco-Flex, includes the ingredients glucosamine, green lipped mussel, Dimethylglycine, and MSM which work to maintain cartilage, prevent cartilage damage, and assist in control of pain and inflammation. Cosequin, a glucosamine and chondroitin supplement is available for both dogs and cats. An added benefit is that it can assist in urinary tract health in cats. For dogs with back arthritis, I recommend Vetri-Disc from Vetri-Science. It contains tracheal cartilage, Manganese, Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Magnesium, and Taurine among other things which work to support bone and connective tissue.

Fish Oils also can contribute to joint health by reducing inflammation. They also help maintain the health of other organs in the body including the heart. My preference is to use a veterinary formulated product for appropriate dosing. I would also suggest using a wild-caught fish oil. Two examples of

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high quality fish oils are Bravo! Salmon Oil and Nordic Naturals.

Acupuncture and herbal therapies rely on thousands of years of knowledge to help relieve your aging pet's arthritis or stiffness and soreness. Acupuncture has been shown to decrease inflammation, provide natural pain relief and diminish muscle spasm thereby improving quality of life. While dogs often are treated at our clinic, many people are surprised to hear that we also treat our feline friends. It is usually very well tolerated and pets actually enjoy the treatments! As with any other medical treatment, acupuncture and herbal therapies should only be performed/administered by a veterinarian who has received proper training.

One of the least talked about remedies we can provide for our senior and arthritic pets is one of the most simple—bedding. Oftentimes, we think that a big fluffy bed is the best option for our pets. Unfortunately, this type of bed doesn't provide the support needed and is difficult to get out of thereby worsening the conditions we are working to improve. The best option is a good quality memory foam mattress such as those offered by K&H. These beds “give” in the right places but stay firm in

others leading to more natural positioning of the body when your pet is resting. They are also much easier to get out of as they tend not to slide. For pets that perpetually seek warm areas to lay, such as sunny spots in the window, K&H has several options from full warming beds to warming pads that lay over the top of a memory foam bed. Also, for pets who tend to “run hot” during the summer or for pets that love the shade or that spot in front of the air conditioner, there are products like the Cool Bed. This is a vinyl mat that is filled with water and is kept cool by a substance in the mat. It fits right on top of the pet's regular bed.

These are just some of the many options available to keep our senior pets comfortable. Quality of life should be our focus at every stage of life, but in a pet's senior years, when they are facing more health issues, it becomes that much more imperative.



How to have a FIDO-FRIENDLY THANKSGIVING



— Share (in moderation) —



White Meat Turkey

Cranberries
(no sugar added)



Plain Pumpkin



*Plain Yams &
Sweet Potatoes*

Mashed Potatoes
(without the butter & fixin's)



*Carrots &
Green Beans*

— Do Not Share — (toxic to pets)

Sage & Nutmeg



Turkey Bones & Skin

Nuts
(especially Macadamia)



Grapes



Onions

Gravy



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(\$49-\$80 Savings)

Includes comprehensive physical exam and one vaccine. Does not include 3yr Rabies vaccine. Must be presented at the time of purchase. Coupon may not be combined with any other offer. NL



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up to \$40 value

Complimentary Bath with 5 Nights Boarding

After spending 5 nights in our boarding facility your pet can receive a bath at no charge. All baths include shampoo, ear cleaning, thorough brushing, pedicure, warm air drying and cologne. May not be combined with any other special offers or coupons. Must be presented at the time of purchase.

****Double coated pets excluded**

Expires 11/30/15 NL



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\$10 Off

\$200 Retail Mix and Match

*Shampoo
*Food

*Heartworm Prevention
*Dietary Supplements

*Flea and Tick Control

Coupon must be presented at the time of purchase. May not be combined with any other offer.

This coupon can not be applied to prescription medications other than heartworm/flea control

Expires 11/30/15 NL