

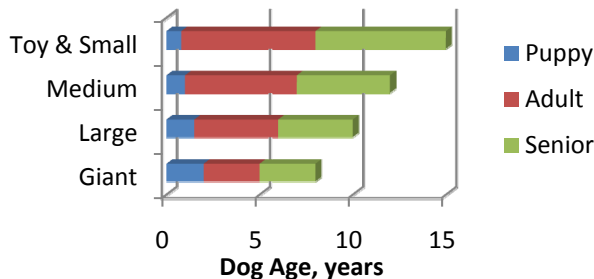


THE NATURAL AUTHORITY™

ON SENIOR DOG HEALTH

Introduction

Due to improvements in pet nutrition and veterinary medicine, dogs today are frequently living to older ages. A dog is considered senior when he enters the last third of his predicted lifespan. This age is different depending on breed size because larger dogs have a shorter expected lifespan than smaller dogs. The senior lifestage starts around 8 years for small and toy breed dogs, 7 for medium breed, 6 for large breed, and as early as 5 years for giant breed dogs. As dogs get older, visible changes may occur, such as greying hair, declining skin and coat condition, or changes in behavior or mobility.



Changes in Senses

Senior dogs experience a decrease in their sensory abilities which can include total or partial loss of hearing, eyesight or sense of smell. Senior dogs also have changes in brain function which may lead to slower and more confused thinking. Due to these changes, a senior dog may appear to be ignoring commands, become disorientated or have a reduced appetite. The care of elderly dogs should be adapted to take into account their different needs.

Changes in Mobility

Senior dogs are likely to experience a reduction in their ability to move around due to changes in senses or decreases in joint health. Proper nutrition and regular, gentle exercise can help with mobility and minimize the risk of other problems such as pressure sores from laying in one position for long periods. As dogs become older, quiet time spent with humans often becomes more important than long walks or excitable play with other dogs. In households with young dogs, a quiet place for senior dogs to get away and relax should be provided.

Health Concerns

Senior dogs are more at risk of certain health problems such as:

- Heart disease
- Cancers
- Joint problems
- Dental problems
- Digestive issues

Senior dogs should receive regular checkups from a veterinarian, so that any problems are identified and treated as soon as possible to ensure they remain healthy for as long as possible.



Senior Dog Nutrition

Senior dogs need less energy intake (i.e. calories) because they are less active and have slower metabolisms. However, they require similar, if not higher, levels of essential nutrients, such as protein, vitamins and minerals. This is why it is important to feed a high quality senior dog food that can fulfill the specific nutritional needs of senior dogs to help them live a long, full life. Senior formulas or functional treats can also supply nutrients for additional health benefits, such as omega fatty acids for skin and coat health or New Zealand green mussel for joint health. Some senior dogs gain weight, whereas others lose weight. It is important to feed an appropriate amount according to body condition. Declining oral health and sensitive gums may provide the opportunity to feed more wet food formats. This can also help improve appetite in senior dogs that have trouble maintaining body weight.

NUTRO® Senior Dog Foods provide tailored nutrition for the specific needs of senior dogs through high quality, natural ingredients fortified with vitamins and minerals.



Reference # DOG03
Issued: July 20, 2011