



FISHER GLEN
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

WELCOME to FISHER GLEN

SENIOR PET INFORMATION KIT

As your pet enters their senior years (over 8 for dogs and 10 for cats) they will be prone to an increasing number of health issues. That's why we have developed this kit, to give you all the information you need to help your pet live a long, healthy life!

Table of Contents

As Your Pet Ages

Healthcare for Your Senior Pet - - - - - page 1

A Geriatric Exam for Your Senior Pet - - - - - page 2

Subtle Signs of Illness to Watch Out For - - - - - page 3

Important Health Information

Osteoarthritis and Your Pet - - - - - page 4-5

Cold Laser Therapy at Fisher Glen - - - - - page 6

Heartworm Disease - - - - - page 7

Lyme Disease - - - - - page 8

Parasites: A Human Health Concern - - - - - page 9

Dental Disease - - - - - page 10

Dental Home Care - - - - - page 11-12

Wellness and Health Checks

Nutrition for Your Older Pet - - - - - page 13

Senior Wellness Plans - - - - - page 14

Fisher Glen Geriatric Health Check - - - - - page 15

Healthcare for Your Senior Pet

It's important to know that as your pet gets older, there are increasing health issues we need to watch out for. Contact us if you have any questions about your senior pet!

www.fisherglen.ca
fisherglen@fisherglen.ca
613 228 7008



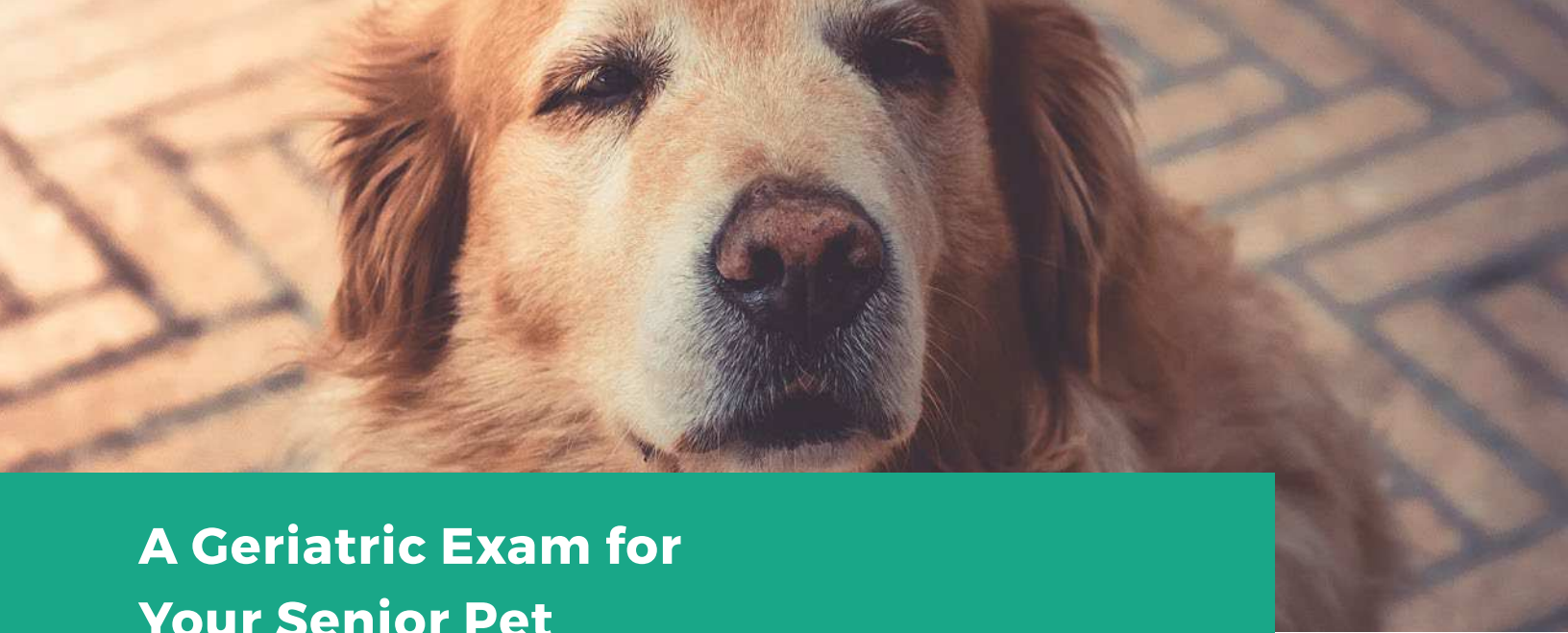
Our records indicate that your pet is now a senior! It's important to know that as your pet gets older there will be changing health, nutritional, and exercise requirements to be aware of over the years ahead.

Generally speaking, cats over 10 years of age and dogs over 8 years of age are considered to be seniors, with the exception of some giant breeds.. Luckily, advances in diet formulation and preventive medicine now allow our pets to live longer, healthier lives than ever before!

In order to provide comprehensive medical care to meet the needs of your aging pet, we recommend preventive health care checkups twice per year. Many diseases, such as diabetes, early kidney failure, cancer, dental disease and thyroid abnormalities can be picked up by your veterinarian through a physical exam and screening tests, even before your pet seems ill. Early intervention in many of these cases will allow your pet to live a longer, more enjoyable life.

In addition to bi-annual exams, the doctors strongly recommend annual bloodwork and urinalysis for geriatric patients, as testing early on in your pet's senior years also gives the doctors a baseline for comparison later on.

Contact us today if you have any questions about your pet, or visit us online at www.fisherglen.ca



A Geriatric Exam for Your Senior Pet

With age comes new challenges for your senior pet. A day of preventive healthcare is a great way to catch any potential problems early on!

You may have noticed behavior changes in your pet that you simply chalked up to old age, or your pet may seem perfectly healthy to you. There are however many problems common to geriatric pets that may not be evident until it is too late to treat them.

That's why we have developed our senior health exam: to help detect and treat underlying health problems in your pet early on, while they're still treatable. During the geriatric exam a number of diagnostic tests will be performed. Your pet will receive a package of geriatric information, as well as a sample of food appropriate for older pets. At the end of the day Drs Gates or Baar will meet with you to discuss the results of their health tests.

This comprehensive exam allows us to pick up subtle signs of disease you may have missed. This includes a dental exam, during which we can identify loose or infected teeth, excessive tartar, or other painful oral problems. Blood work is used to detect changes in the function of many internal organs, such as the liver, kidneys, and pancreas. It can also be used to detect some cancers. A urinalysis is used to identify urinary tract infections, crystal formation or abnormal cells (such as cancers). Chest X-rays may be performed to assess the heart and lungs of older animals, and may allow for early intervention, particularly for cardiac disease.

Contact us at fisherglen@fisherglen.ca to book your geriatric health exam!

Subtle Signs of Illness to Watch Out For

Unlike humans, pets can't tell us when they feel ill. They may even instinctively hide illness until they are quite sick. However, there are signs you can watch for that will allow us to catch some of the more common geriatric diseases early.



1. Water Intake

Water intake can be an indicator of several problems, including disease of the liver or adrenal glands, kidney failure, diabetes, or thyroid problems. Any change may be significant, particularly if your pet begins to drink more than usual. In cats, watch out for an extra wet litter box.

2. Changes in Appetite

Changes in appetite may signal illness. Animals with diabetes tend to eat more than usual, while cats in kidney failure will gradually eat less. In general, contact your veterinarian if your pet stops eating for two days or more, or if their appetite is significantly decreased for more than two to three days.

3. Weight Changes

Weight loss tends to occur gradually as your pet ages, but it can also be an indicator of underlying illness. Both kidney disease and diabetes can cause gradual but steady changes in weight.

4. Vomiting and Diarrhea

Vomiting, diarrhea, or loose stool may be a sign of disease. Even though there is a perception that it is normal for cats to vomit, we now understand that vomiting more than occasionally (maybe every month or so) or with increased frequency may be a sign of underlying illness - and hey, nobody likes to vomit!

5. Behavioural Changes

Behavioural changes may be significant, including activity level and enjoyment of normal activities. Sick cats often hide, whereas sick dogs may become clingy or less inclined to go for walks. Pets with thyroid abnormalities may have distinct changes in energy level. Older pets are also subject to the same types of cognitive change or dementia that humans are, and changes in their routine, staring at the walls, losing housetraining and commands and not sleeping well may be an indication of this insidious change.

Osteoarthritis and Your Pet

Osteoarthritis is a common and often debilitating problem in pets. It is a chronic degenerative disease of the joints, especially the hips, elbows, knees or intervertebral joints of the spine. This can occur due to an injury, or simply

due to wear and tear over the years. When cartilage is damaged, a series of inflammatory events take place, eventually destroying the cartilage and underlying bone. The pain this causes can greatly affect a pet's quality of life.

What Can I Do?

First, recognize the signs! Over 80% of dogs and 92% of cats over 5 have some degree of arthritis. One of the problems in recognizing arthritis is its onset is often gradual: we may think our pets are just getting older. However, the following may be signs arthritis is the culprit:

- ◆ Reluctance to walk as far as usual
- ◆ Difficulty climbing stairs, climbing into the car or jumping onto beds or couches – or missing jumps
- ◆ Stiffness or difficulty rising from rest
- ◆ Licking at a single joint
- ◆ Limping
- ◆ Increased Panting
- ◆ Acting withdrawn
- ◆ Grouchiness, behavioural changes, or soreness when touched
- ◆ Housesoiling. In cats, they may be too sore to get into their litterbox
- ◆ Decreased grooming of hard-to-reach areas



Osteoarthritis and Your Pet (cont)

When it comes to osteoarthritis, the goal of therapy is to allow your pet to continue to exercise moderately and comfortably. This will help maintain muscle mass, prevent weakness, and keep the joints mobile. Therapy may include some or all of the following treatments:

1. Reduced calorie diets for overweight or obese pets. Increased weight wreaks havoc on the joints.
2. Mobility diets, enhanced with extra omega fatty acids, green-lipped mussel, glucosamine, amino acids and a host of other ingredients that help preserve joint health. And they WORK!
3. Physiotherapy and rehabilitation including acupuncture, TENS, massage, hydrotherapy and exercise routines. At Fisher Glen we now offer cold laser therapy for our arthritic senior pets and have noticed a dramatic difference in their quality of life.
4. Disease modifying nutraceutical agents such as chondroitin sulfate, glucosamine hydrochloride, or omega fatty acid supplementation. There are many veterinary preparations available.
5. Joint-protective medication injections.
6. A multimodal analgesic regime. This may include medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (drugs related to ibuprofen), tramadol, steroids, gabapentin, amantadine, or narcotic agents. (Please note: often cocktails of medications are used to address different parts of the pain pathway, so do not be concerned if your veterinarian suggests more than one medication). The combination of medications and dosages, as well as potential interactions, should be carefully monitored by your veterinarian, and periodic laboratory testing will be recommended in order to monitor for potential side effects.



Cold Laser Therapy at Fisher Glen

We all want our four legged friends to have the best quality of life, and pain free mobility is a big part of that. That's why we now offer cold laser therapy for senior pets. Cold laser therapy is a simple and painless procedure which

works by directing biostimulative light energy into the body's cells. The cells convert this into chemical energy to promote natural healing and pain relief, reducing your pet's discomfort. To date we have seen very promising results!

What Does Cold Laser Therapy Do?

In addition to reducing inflammation and improving soft tissue healing in wounds, tendons and muscles, the procedure also acts as analgesia, reducing both acute and chronic pain

Cold laser therapy has been used since the 1970s. There have been many studies and much research done on the subject. To date there have been no adverse side effects found.

What Results Can I Expect?

After trying cold laser therapy, many report that their pets are acting much younger, that they are better about to stand and walk by themselves and are even climbing the stairs again; things they hadn't seen in years! While of course no health care device or effect can be guaranteed, the results have been very promising.

For more information or to book a session, contact us at 613 228 7008





Heartworm Disease in Pets: What You Need to Know

What is Heartworm Disease?

Heartworm is a large worm (from 5 to 14 inches long) that lives in the heart and blood vessels. Pets acquire it from a mosquito bite by an infected insect. Heartworm is present in most of North America, including the Ottawa area.

What Does Heartworm do?

When the mosquito bites your pet, larval heartworms are transmitted which mature into adults in the bloodstream. Adult worms live in the blood vessels of the lungs and heart. With significant infection, blood vessels become damaged and the dog may have heart failure. Clinical symptoms include exercise intolerance, cough, and nose bleeds. Sudden death may occur.

How is it Diagnosed?

Infection is typically diagnosed via a blood test. X-rays and ultrasound may be used to confirm infection and the degree of damage being caused by the worms. Dogs should be tested each spring, 5-6 months after the end of the previous mosquito season, allowing time for the infection to develop far enough along to be detected. This is

important even if you gave ALL of your preventive medication diligently the year before, as not all of the preventives are 100% effective, and even dogs who enjoy getting the pills may vomit them or spit them out later.

Early diagnosis gives your pet a better chance of being treated successfully, should they have become infected while on their preventive medication.

Can it be Treated or Prevented?

Luckily, the disease is preventable, and also treatable if necessary. Prevention is best, as treatment of heartworm is costly and dangerous to the pet.

There are several different formulations of preventive medication, ranging from chewable or flavoured tablets, to topical drops applied to the skin. It is recommended that all dogs exposed to mosquitoes use a preventive medication from June to November of each year. For pets travelling to the southern US it is best for them to be on preventive medication year round.

For more information, contact us today at 613 228 7008 or go to fisherglen.ca

Lyme Disease in Pets, an FAQ

Lyme disease is spread to dogs by infected ticks, caused by a spirochete called *Borrelia Burgdorferia*. Only certain types of ticks carry the disease, however in recent years these ticks have been increasing in number in the Ottawa area.



Remember, Timely Testing is Vital to Your Pet's Health!

Why should I test every year?

Lyme disease is one of three tick-borne diseases that occur in this area. The others, anaplasmosis and erlichia, are less common. By testing your dog each year we may be able to catch and treat an infection if your pet has symptoms. It also gives you a good idea of whether you yourself may have been exposed to infected ticks, as lyme disease is much more serious in humans.

What if my dog gets Lyme disease?

If your pet is bitten by an infected tick there is a 5 to 10% chance that they will become ill. Most commonly they will develop fever, joint pain and swelling, and general malaise, however some dogs will also develop life threatening kidney disease. A sick dog will generally be effectively treated with a course of antibiotics.

How can I prevent it?

There are two ways to keep your pet lyme free. There is a vaccine which is very efficacious, so if you are concerned about your pet getting sick, get the vaccine. The other important part of the equation is tick control. There are a number of products now that can be used monthly to quickly kill any tick that bites your dog, usually before they have had time to transmit the disease. Tick control also helps to protect the human population, and saves you from having to remove the ticks yourself, which can pose a risk to you. We recommend year-round tick control, since ticks are active about 4°C, and we are seeing them even during the winter in Ottawa.

For more information about ticks and lyme prevention visit fisherglen.ca

In the US between 3 to 6 million people a year are infected with roundworms. In some areas it is as much as a quarter of the population!

The larvae of these parasites can travel through the body and cause serious illness, including blindness. Children, the elderly, and people who are immunosuppressed are particularly at risk. That's why it's vital to make timely deworming a priority!

Virtually all pets have intestinal parasites that were passed to them via their mother's milk or the placenta. Even if they are dewormed they can be reinfected from the environment, and more importantly, they often harbour larval forms of the parasites.

Regular deworming is the safest way to protect yourself, your family, and your pet. Adult pets should be dewormed a minimum of four times per year. (It is generally recommended that dogs be on a year-round monthly dewormer that also kills heartworm, ticks, and fleas.) Medication can be picked up at the clinic and administered to adults orally, and a fecal test should be done at least once per year, including indoor cats. Ask us today about a treatment plan that's right for you!

Remember, this is an important human health issue. We can decrease human infections by keeping our pets free of parasites, too. For more information visit **www.fisherglen.ca**

Parasites: A Human Health Concern

Not only are parasites harmful to pets, many of them can cause severe infection in humans as well. That's why it's vital to routinely deworm our pets; not just for their own health, but the wellbeing of our families too.





Dental Disease in Pets: Assessment and Prevention

Why is Dental Care Important?

Pets get the same types of dental disease we do! Approximately 90% of dogs and 70% of cats over 5 are affected. With your own teeth, the dentist has a small but critical role in your oral hygiene, but you still have to do all the daily brushing and flossing required to slow the progression of periodontal disease. It's the same with your pet - your dog's dental hygiene is primarily in your hands! Dental disease is painful for pets, so we need to ensure we're taking proper preventive care.

What is Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease is the result of bacterial infection. As it progresses, the structures supporting the teeth are weakened, leading to painful, loose and lost teeth. The infection also showers bacteria into the blood to areas like the heart, joints and kidneys, which can cause or exacerbate disease.

Does my Pet Have Dental Disease?

With dental disease, you are likely to notice a foul smell from the mouth, brown tartar on the teeth, red gums, and an unwillingness to play with certain toys. (They may have trouble with kibble.)

The smell is a sign that all is not well, and the tartar is dental plaque that has become mineralized. Plaque is the enemy! It's essentially like a slime blanket of food, saliva, bacteria and other germs that coat the teeth, filling the area between the tooth and gum.

What Can I Do About it?

Have your veterinarian perform regular oral health examinations, and follow a home-care program. (See our section on dental home care.)

Dental Assessments

If the gums are diseased, or there are broken or infected teeth, it is critical to have the teeth x-rayed, assessed and cleaned before you try home care, because your pet's mouth may be too sore for brushing, and you can damage the inflamed tissues. Only an x-ray can tell us what lies below the gum line, and disease can exist even if the teeth appear normal.

Although it would be nice if our pets would sit still and hold their mouths open for a cleaning, the reality is the only way to properly assess your pet's mouth is under general anaesthetic.

Getting Started With Dental Home Care

Dental care is an important part of your cat or dog's overall health, and it's best to start as soon as possible! By brushing once or twice weekly, you can get your pet used to the dental home care process.



1. Start as soon as possible.

Ideally, eight to twelve weeks old is great. By brushing once or twice weekly you help get them used to the idea early so that they are familiar with the process by the time their permanent teeth erupt.

Once they are an adult you want to be brushing at least four times weekly to have an effect. But if your pet is older, use the following guidelines to make the process as easy as possible.

2. Make it Fun!

When it comes to dental home care, make it fun! Use lots of love, praise and treats. Keep sessions short at first and, if possible, at the same time everyday, to set up a routine. If your pet is food motivated you can brush before a meal so that the meal is the reward.

Start by handling the muzzle and lips, then rubbing teeth and gums. You can put a bit of beef broth for dogs or tuna juice for cats in their mouth as a treat.

Next, use a gauze, washcloth or piece of pantyhose flavoured and wrapped around your finger. Begin gently rubbing the teeth and gums.

Finally, try a soft toothbrush or proxy brush with your broth or juice. Hold the brush at a 45 degree angle to the tooth and brush back and forth from the gum to the tip. Brushing the tongue side is less critical. (cont)

(cont) You can then add a veterinary toothpaste or gel (human pastes cause stomach upset) but remember, it's the mechanical action of brushing that removes most of the plaque, which is the culprit in dental disease.

You will not be successful in removing the mineralized plaque, (called tartar or calculus) from the teeth by brushing, but that's okay. Your veterinarian has the tools to do this part!

3. Use Abrasive Food and Toys

It can help a lot to use abrasive foods and toys such as dental kibble, pressed rawhide, dense rubber chew toys or dental chews to reduce plaque accumulation. Avoid natural bones, dried cow hooves and hard nylon toys, as these can be hard enough to break teeth and are not recommended.

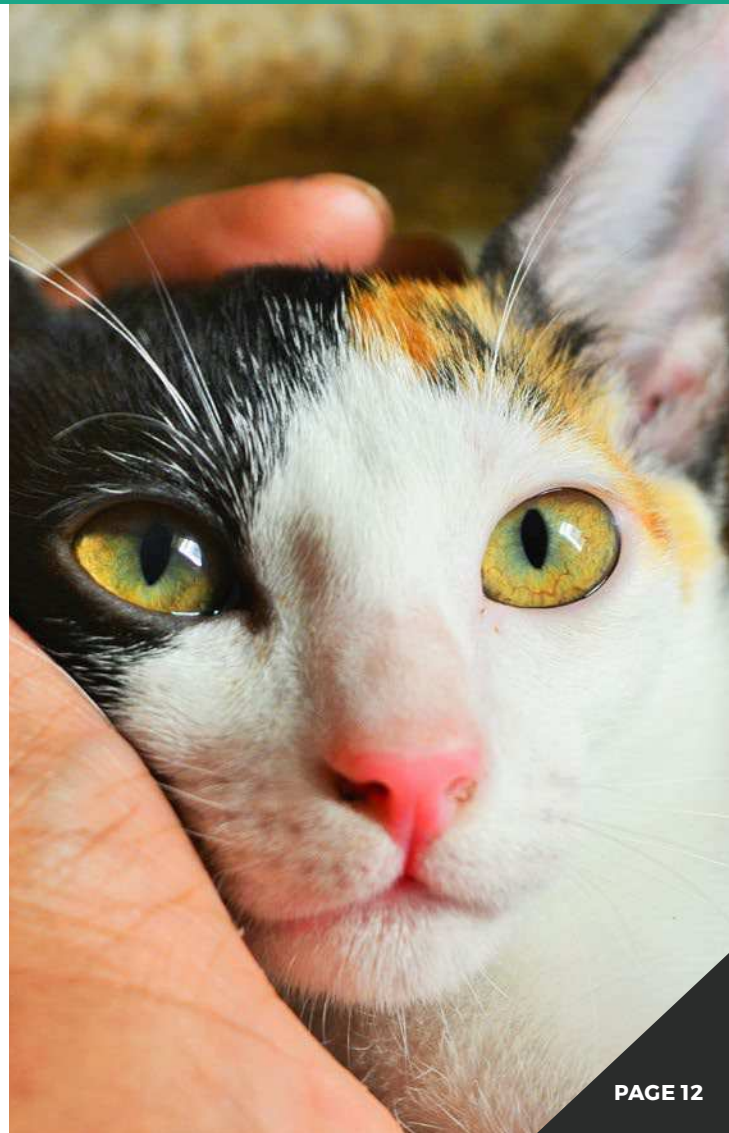
4. Keep at It!

By following a consistent home-care program you will greatly improve your pet's overall dental health (as well as their doggy or kitty breath). It can also potentially be a pleasant bonding experience for you both.

But ultimately, it will mean fewer professional cleanings and a happier, more pain-free pet. Good oral hygiene has been shown to extend your pet's life by up to two years! But remember, these practices are no substitute for the professional assessments and cleaning at your veterinarian, the same as your trips to the dentist.

Getting Started With Dental Home Care (cont)

You want to be brushing an adult pet's teeth at least four times a week in order to have an effect in the prevention of dental disease. Be patient, keep at it and don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions!



Nutrition for Your Older Pet

As pets grow from puppies to adults and then to seniors, their nutritional requirements change. What you choose to feed your pet every day is one of the most important parts of good preventive care, and can influence the

length and quality of their life in a big way! That's why having the right diet for your senior cat or dog is so important. Never hesitate to ask us if you'd like to go over different options. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Just as with people, pets' metabolisms slow down as they age, and they may develop age-related health problems.

For example, your pet may require a diet with controlled intake of protein, salt and phosphorus to help maintain healthy kidneys. Fat may also need to be decreased depending on activity level, and fibre increased to help promote healthy bowels. Your pet may also benefit from an increase in some vitamins and nutrients to help maintain an ideal skin and coat.

Ask your veterinarian which senior diet would be the healthy choice for your pet once they are 8-10 years or older. There are excellent maintenance senior diets available for generally healthy pets, as well as prescription diets geared towards animals with specific medical problems.

For more information, contact us today at 613 228 7008 or visit fisherglen.ca





Senior Wellness Plans From Fisher Glen Animal Hospital

At Fisher Glen Animal Hospital we believe that preventive medicine and timely checkups are the key to a long and healthy life. That's why we recommend pet insurance be considered by every owner, and it's also why we offer animal wellness plans for our clients, designed to give your pet the best quality of care at the most affordable price.

A Note on Pet Insurance

Injury and illness in pets can lead to medical bills in the thousands of dollars, since much of the treatment parallels that which is available in human medicine. It is heart-wrenching to have to make a decision based on finances. This is where insurance comes in. Pet insurance is available from a number of different companies. We will be happy to discuss the different options with you and make a recommendation!

Wellness Plans from Fisher Glen

When you sign up for one of our senior wellness plans, we will provide all the routine care needed for one year. In addition to a discount on veterinary services, you also get peace of mind

knowing you can bring your pet in for 1 free extra exam at any time, plus a discount on all pet foods.

Senior Wellness Plans

What's Included:

- ◆ 2 Geriatric Biannual Examinations
- ◆ Core Vaccinations
- ◆ 1 Geriatric Bloodwork
- ◆ 1 Fecal and Urinalysis with Collection
- ◆ 1 Year Deworming and Tick & Heartworm Prevention for Dogs
- ◆ 1 Bordetella or Lyme vaccine for Dogs
- ◆ 1 Cold Laser Therapy for Dogs
- ◆ Free Monthly Nail Trimmings
- ◆ 1 Free Bag TD Dental Diet
- ◆ 10% Discount on All Food Purchases
- ◆ 1 Free Extra Exam at Any Time
- ◆ NEW Optional Dental Plan Add-on

If you have any questions, contact us at fisherglen@fisherglen.ca or call us at 613 228 7008! We would be happy to answer them for you. You can also learn more about these and other wellness plans at www.fisherglen.ca

Fisher Glen Animal Hospital Geriatric Health Check

Please feel free to fill out the following questionnaire to help your vet determine if there are any physical or behavioral changes in your pet that need attention.



Please Check Off Any Changes That Apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Having house soiling accidents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty seeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty urinating or defecating | <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to urinate more often | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty when getting up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pants after walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble getting up or down stairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeps more | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of appetite |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seems less willing to exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in thirst |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acting irritable | <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting/Diarrhea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to play less | <input type="checkbox"/> Weakness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suffers from bad breath | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanders or paces aimlessly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appears to be losing hair | <input type="checkbox"/> Responds slower when called |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change in hair coat | <input type="checkbox"/> Losing or gaining weight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No longer greeting family | <input type="checkbox"/> Any behavioural changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other issues you would like to discuss with the veterinarian: | |
