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**STRENGTHENING THE  
 HUMAN – ANIMAL  
 CONNECTION**



**Senior Pet Screening Checklist**

*The aging process affects both mind and body. When we see behavior changes in our senior pets we need to look at both the mind as well as the other body systems to determine what might be contributing factors. As animals age their body systems go through progressive and irreversible changes. Organ decline, sensory decline, degenerative conditions, age related central nervous system pathology, and an increasing number of medical problems, all impact on a pet's behavior. For example, any condition that is associated with pain or discomfort, can lead to increased irritability, an increased anxiety or fear of being handled or approached, and ultimately an increase in aggressive displays.*

*This checklist will help screen for underlying medical conditions. There is also a special section that will screen for Cognitive Dysfunction which is defined as the occurrence of one or more geriatric onset behavior problems, which are not sufficiently accounted for by medical conditions. Age related cognitive changes can occur for many reasons including, but not limited to the following: Alzheimer-type pathology within the brain; chronic hypoxia due to certain underlying medical conditions; cerebral atrophy; decreased number of neurons; and neurochemical changes.*

*Owner observations are an important aspect of health care of all pets, but especially in our senior pets. This information tells us about some of the signs that may not be obvious on a physical exam. This checklist, along with regular veterinary check-ups and lab work, can help us to identify and treat medical and cognitive problems early, which often offers a better prognosis.*

Date:  
 Owner's Name:  
 Pet's Name:  
 Age:  
 Species: Canine \_\_\_\_ Feline \_\_\_\_

Directions:

Place a check mark after each sign that is present.

After "Severity": Use the following key:

- 0 = No problem**
- 1 = Mild**
- 2 = Moderate**
- 3 = Severe**

After "Describe": List when problem began and any additional information

Weight gain ____	Severity: ____	Describe:
Weight loss ____	Severity: ____	Describe:
Appetite increase ____	Severity: ____	Describe:
Appetite decrease ____	Severity: ____	Describe:
Vomiting ____	Severity: ____	Describe:
Diarrhea ____	Severity: ____	Describe:



Senior pet screening checklist continued:

Colitis (stool with mucus or blood) ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Constipation/difficult defecation ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Increased drinking ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Increased urine ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Coughing ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Weakness after exercise ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Panting ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Lumps/tumors ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Skin problems ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Bad breath/sore gums/difficulty chewing ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Muscle tremors/shaking ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Weakness/incoordination ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Difficulty climbing stairs/increased stiffness ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Diminished vision ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___
Diminished hearing ___	Severity: ___	Describe: ___

### **Cognitive Dysfunction Screening Checklist**

There are eight categories labeled A thru G2.  
After each description use the following Key:

- 0 = none**
- 1 = mild**
- 2 = moderate**
- 3 = severe**

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#### **A: Confusion - Awareness - Spatial orientation**

- gets lost in familiar locations \_\_\_
- goes to wrong side of door (e.g., hinge side) \_\_\_
- gets stuck, cannot navigate around or over obstacles \_\_\_
- decreased responsiveness to stimuli \_\_\_

#### **B: Relationships - Social behavior**

- decreased interest in petting/contact \_\_\_
- decreased greeting behavior \_\_\_
- alterations/problems with social hierarchy \_\_\_
- in need of constant contact, overdependent, 'clingy' \_\_\_

#### **C: Activity - Increased/repetitive**

- stares/fixation/snaps at objects \_\_\_
- pacing/wanders aimlessly \_\_\_
- licking owners, household objects \_\_\_
- vocalization \_\_\_
- increased appetite (eats quicker or more food) \_\_\_

#### **D: Activity - Decreased - Apathy**

- decreased exploration/activity/apathy \_\_\_
- decreased responsiveness to stimuli \_\_\_
- decreased self-care \_\_\_
- decreased appetite \_\_\_

#### **E: Anxiety - Increased irritability**

- restless/agitation \_\_\_
- anxiety about being separated from owners \_\_\_
- increased irritability \_\_\_



Cognitive Screen continued:

**F: Sleep-wake cycles; Reversed day/night schedule**

- restless sleep/waking at nights \_\_\_\_
- increased daytime sleep \_\_\_\_

**G1: Learning and Memory - Housesoiling**

- indoor elimination at random sites or in view of owners \_\_\_\_
- decrease/loss of signaling \_\_\_\_
- goes outdoors, then returns indoors and eliminates \_\_\_\_
- elimination in crate or sleeping area \_\_\_\_
- incontinence \_\_\_\_

**G2: Learning and Memory - Work, Tasks, Commands**

- impaired working ability \_\_\_\_
- decreased recognition of familiar people/pets \_\_\_\_
- decreased responsiveness to known commands and tricks \_\_\_\_
- decreased ability to perform tasks \_\_\_\_
- inability/slow to learn new tasks (retrain) \_\_\_\_

**Discuss any additional concerns or use this space to describe details of any of the problems listed previously:**

