



THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL

A Quarterly Newsletter

Prepared by the staff of the Southtowns Animal Hospital

Newman, Editor-in-Chief

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A MESSAGE FROM DOCTOR WINKLE



First, I would like to thank all of you who sent in responses to our survey. Newman enjoyed reading all of his E-mail. All of us here at Southtowns appreciate your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to drop us a note, "E" or paper, anytime. We received many GREAT suggestions for articles, so look for yours in upcoming issues.

A large portion of our practice is devoted to our older pets, as our friends are living longer, healthier lives due to medical advances in veterinary science. You, the caring owner are doing your part to keep pets on the right track by keeping well informed and practicing healthy pet care and preventative medicine at home. Regular vet visits, daily toothbrushing, and superior nutrition are all giving our pets a good quality of life well into their old age

WILL YOU STILL NEED ME, WILL YOU STILL FEED ME, WHEN I'M 64?

PET'S AGE	PET'S SIZE (IN POUNDS)			
	0-20	21-50	51-90	90+
5	36	37	40	42
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	123
17	84	92	104	
18	88	96	109	
19	92	101	115	
20	96	105	120	

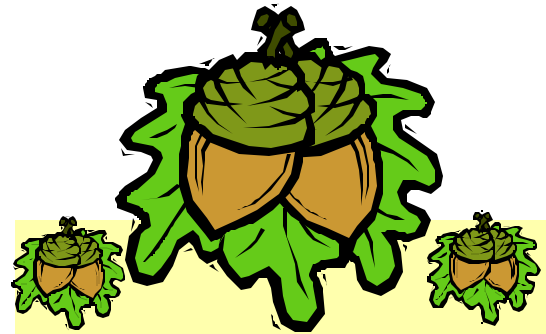
Of course you will still love your pet when he is 64! But what is 64 in dog or cat years?

On average, an animal 7 years or older qualifies as a senior. This varies, however with size and breed. Toy breeds tend to show signs of aging later than giant breeds.

This handy chart will help you determine the relative age of your pet in human years.

Ages printed in *italics* are senior years, **bold-face** are geriatric. Be sure to visit us every 6 months to track changes in your pet's health.

Information based on a chart developed by Dr. Fred L. Metzger, DVM



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SENIOR PET MONTH!

Companion animals are living longer than ever. In fact, the oldest recorded age for a dog is 29 years, and the oldest for a cat is 34 years!

Since your pet doesn't become old at a certain age, you should look for changes that signal the aging process such as: a touch of grey around the muzzle, increasing cloudiness in the eyes, and a less frisky gait. These are just some of the obvious physical changes you might see in your senior pet.

According to a recent survey, 98% of veterinarians believe older pets have different medical needs and would benefit from specialized services and testing. Scheduling your senior pet for twice yearly physical exams is an important step in monitoring and managing these patients.

Ask our friendly staff about our "Over 40" package to help ensure that your pet will enjoy the best possible quality of life with you for



ASK NEWMAN

Dear Newman,

I was a very bad dog. I didn't come when my owner called and I got hit by a car. I'm feeling guilty because they say I was very expensive to make all better.. Do you think my owners could set up a payment plan for me?

Dear Guilty,

Those squirrels on the other side of the road always look juicy, don't they? I am sorry to hear of your misfortune, and glad to hear that you are all better. No one ever seems to plan for emergencies and accidents do they?

Even though I am the Mastermind of everything that happens here at Southtowns, there is no easy answer to your questions, but there are things you can suggest to your people just in case you decide to take on another car.

Our focus is making all the animals out there better. It would be very expensive for us to have someone who would keep track of billing. We want to be sure that the services we provide are the best, and as reasonable as we can without sacrificing quality medicine.

Compared to human doctors, veterinarians give you a great value for your healthcare dollar. I know this because Dr. Edinger showed me one of his doctor bills. Veterinarians are just as educated as people doctors, and they use the same equipment and drugs. Your humans may think that your care is expensive because the only bill they see from their doctor is a small one called a deductible.

It can be a shock to see the total cost of a complicated procedure, especially when the reason for the procedure was unplanned.

If you try, you can have your people come to the hospital and the receptionists can tell them all about CareCredit, which is like a credit card with a selection of interest free periods. There is even pet insurance, which a trio of alert Golden Retrievers asked about via e-mail. I will talk about insurance for pets in detail in my next issue. Some humans use both Care Credit and insurance. If you come along with your humans the receptionists will pet you and give you treats. I may even make one of my rare public appearances.

Hopefully, that will help. Have your people give a call at 824-4108 if they have any questions.

P.S. STAY OUT OF THE ROAD!
--Newman

CORRECTION

We blush to mention that we misspelled the word "friend" On the back cover of our last issue. Newman had just found where we keep the catnip and did not catch the error. We apologize. Rest assured, that while the simple words may sometimes confuse us we can still spell "Phenylpropanolamine"



THE TECHNICAL VIEW

By
Debbie Pawelczyk, LVT

A SENIOR HEALTH CHECK IS THE BEST BET FOR YOUR PET

As our pets become older, there are certain physiological changes that need to be addressed. Our senior pets can exhibit any of the following signs of aging: poor appetite, weight loss, increased thirst or urination. Some pets become less active and sleep more. These can be signs of old age, but they can also be the early signals of serious medical problems. The best way to determine your pet's state of health is to do some blood work.

The following tests can be run right here at Southtowns Animal Hospital. It is important for the doctors to find any potential problems early, when they are most treatable.

CBC--This is a **C**omplete **B**lood **C**ount, and it tests your pets hydration level and looks for signs of infection. It is a general test of your pet's immune system.

FULL PROFILE-- This series of tests is sometimes called a blood chemistry. By running the 16 different tests in a full profile we are able to evaluate organ function, especially of the liver and kidneys, and can help the doctors assess possible poisonings, and also helps us determine a pet's ability to undergo anesthesia.

BUN--This test for **B**lood **U**rea **N**itrogen is one of the tests included in the full profile., and it is directly related to kidney function.

CREATININE--This is another test that reveals kidney function. This test helps to distinguish between kidney and non-kindey causes of an elevated BUN.

ALKP--Stands for **A**lkaline **P**hosphatase and is an indicator of liver disease. Elevations are of concern and can have a variety of causes.

GLUCOSE--Tests the blood Sugar level. Elevated levels may indicate Diabetes Mellitus. Low levels can cause collapse, seizures or coma.

I hope this brief overview of blood work has been helpful in understanding the ways we try to help your senior companions through the golden years of life.

ARTHRITIS AND THE OLDER DOG

Arthritis is the inflammation of a joint. It can occur in any joint, including the spine and jaw. Signs of arthritis include painful or stiff joint movement, swelling, and a grating sensation during movement. Arthritis can also cause redness of the skin over the joint. Polyarthritis is inflammation of several joints at the same time. It is often associated with complex internal diseases. Causes of arthritis include degeneration from aging, inherited arthritis, infection, injury, blood diseases, allergic or immune disease and cancer.

Radiographs (X-rays) and lab tests are necessary to determine the type and extent of the arthritis. Follow up exams during treatment are needed to evaluate the response to therapy.

Arthritis is a controllable rather than a curable disease. Therapy is designed to minimize discomfort and delay or prevent progression of the disease.

Older dogs can have liver or kidney difficulties which can affect the kind of medications used to treat arthritis, so it is important to perform blood tests, to be sure that these problems do not develop or worsen.

Onions Can do Worse Things Than Make You Cry



Onions, even in small quantities, are toxic to pets. Raw, cooked, or powdered, they are dangerous. When ingested, they have a direct effect on the red blood cells of dogs and cats, damaging hemoglobin, which is the oxygen-carrying protein of red blood cells. Consumed in great quantities, onions cause the structure of the red blood cells to change, causing the dog or cat's body to destroy its own blood cells, an often fatal condition called hemolytic anemia.

Often, sick animals are encouraged to eat baby food to tempt their appetite or as a component of a bland diet. Great care needs to be taken that no onion powder is present on the ingredient list.

Owners of sporting dogs need to be watchful when their dogs are in the field as onions grow wild in the woods and in abandoned farms and gardens.

At this time little is known about the causes of onion toxicity in pets. Onions are members of the lily family and many other lilies are poisonous. There are many kinds of onions, as well as similar plants such as leeks and chives, and it may be that one kind of onion is more toxic than another.

Until more is known, be sure to remain vigilant and keep all onions away from your pet.

WE HAD FUN AT THE PICNIC!

This year the staff picnic was held at Dr. Winkle's house, and we can't thank him enough for his hospitality. Dr. Winkle responded to the gentle hints of some of the staff (Mary, Merry--not to name names) and provided a luscious clam bar.

In addition to seafood on the half-shell, we all munched Chili dogs, bread dip, baked beans, German Potato salad (from Bravaria!?!?) and lazy pierogi.

Staff coordination has improved so much that we were promoted to metal horseshoes for our annual tourney.

The buffet of desserts presented a vast array of sweets sure to tempt the most finicky palate.

Darlene's baby made a personal appearance as the newest member of our Southtowns family.

By the end of the day we were sunburned grass-stained, and stuffed like olives.

And to top it all off, no one fell into the pond!



OLDER KITTIES SUSCEPTIBLE TO HYPERTHYROIDISM

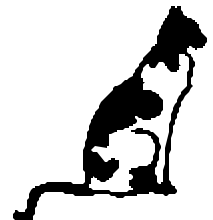
The thyroid is a gland located in the neck of people, cats and other animals. This gland produces thyroid hormone, a substance that is transported to every cell in the body. The primary function of thyroid hormone is to control the rate at which cells function. Too much makes cells work very fast, and too little causes cells to slow down. Excess thyroid function (hyperthyroidism) is one of the most common diseases diagnosed in cats 8 years and older.

Each cat reacts differently to this condition. Some of the most common owner observations are: weight loss, increased appetite, patchy hair loss, increased thirst and urine production.

Most hyperthyroid cats have too much thyroid hormone (T4) in their blood, and this can be confirmed with a blood test. This condition is caused by a tumor, almost always benign, growing on the thyroid gland.

Hyperthyroid cats that are not treated tend to become more and more ill, while treatment will usually return your cat to a reasonable state of good health.

Should your older cat develop hyperthyroidism, there are several treatment options which you can discuss with your doctor to find what will be the best for your cat.



SOUTHTOWNS ANIMAL HOSPITAL

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THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL

IN THIS BIG
ISSUE



WE SING ABOUT
SENIOR PETS!



The importance of routine blood screening for our senior cats and dogs.



Is your pet a senior citizen? Find out inside with our handy-dandy chart.



Ailments common to elderly pets--what to watch for, what to do.



Southtowns Annual Picnic Update--more fun than should be allowed by law.