



436 Empire Bay Drive
Empire Bay NSW 2257
Ph: 02 4363 2222
Web: www.beachandbayvet.com.au
Email: info@beachandbayvet.com.au

Supporting your senior dog

The Beach and Bay team are passionate about helping your pet to live their best lives, throughout *all* stages of life. Here's how we can help your dog live as comfortably and happily as possible, regardless of their age.

What are some of the most common older dog issues to keep an eye out for?

1. Arthritis

Arthritis affects 80% of dogs over 8 years old. Have you seen any of the following in your dog? Often, rather than obvious limping, our pets show more subtle symptoms:

- Temporary stiffness after rest or vigorous exercise
- A hesitance to climb stairs or jump onto couches or into cars
- Quieter or more grumpy behaviour
- Difficulty settling to sleep or in their regular sleep spots
- Difficulty with posturing to go to the toilet
- Less enthusiasm for and lower energy levels on walks

We offer many options for supporting joint mobility and comfort in dogs, including:

- Anti-inflammatory pain relief (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)
- Long-acting pain relief injections
- Joint health support injections
- Safe and effective joint health supplements
- Adjunctive pain relief medications

2. Dental disease

Dental disease will gradually develop in any dog without a good dental hygiene maintenance routine, but it is much more likely to be present in older pets. Ensuring your older pet has clean teeth is more important than just fresh breath. Unhealthy teeth and gums allow bacteria to enter your pet's bloodstream, which can cause

damage to organs and seriously reduce their quality and quantity of life. Painful oral infection can also alter their behaviour and damage the bond they have with their owners.

Some owners may be reluctant to put their senior dog under general anaesthesia for dental procedures, due to concerns about the general anaesthetic. We'd like to reassure you that we have fully qualified and registered veterinary nurses using the latest in anaesthetic monitoring, for every anaesthetic. We also include a blood test in the price of every scale and polish, ensuring we have the best information for each individual patient going into every dental. For our senior patients, the anaesthesia risk is minimal and is far outweighed by the health and quality of life benefits of a comfortable, disease-free mouth!

As well as regular oral health assessments and dental procedures we can provide information and support around home care products and methods for keeping your dog's mouth clean and fresh.

3. Organ changes

As dogs age, they are more likely to develop chronic organ changes such as kidney disease, liver issues, heart disease, or chronic gut problems.

At home, it is important to monitor your pet's weight, energy levels, appetite, stools, and drinking/urination levels, and seek advice regarding any changes in these markers of health. We also recommend [routine 6-monthly health checks](#) for dogs 8 years old and over. This is because our vets are often able to detect developing issues earlier with physical examination and blood/urine tests.

If your pet is diagnosed with chronic organ changes, our vets will be able to recommend supportive medications and/or prescription diets to help maintain their wellness for longer. This veterinary advice and support will ease the pressure on the body organs that are struggling, and help your pet to live their best life.

4. Behavioural and sleep changes

It is still reasonably common for behavioural or sleep changes in older dogs to be written off as them “just getting older”. Frequently noted symptoms include:

- Decreased activity during the day (more sleeping)
- Increased night-waking
- Incontinence or other changes in toileting habits
- Increased anxiety or unsettledness
- “Forgetfulness” or confusion
- Random barking

In older pets, these symptoms may be caused by either a deterioration in brain health (i.e. “doggy dementia”) or other health issues affecting the pet’s brain or mental health, such as chronic pain associated with joint discomfort, or high blood pressure associated with kidney disease.

If your pet shows any behavioural changes such as those listed above, we recommend a prompt check-up so our veterinary team can determine the underlying cause. Based on our diagnosis, we can recommend treatment or management of your pet’s condition, including medications to improve bloodflow to the brain, and other medications and foods to help support brain function and rest. These will all help your dog to feel and be their best self.

5. Coughing, heart and respiratory concerns

If your older dog has developed a cough, especially when they wake up, have a drink or get excited, you may be seeing the first signs of heart or respiratory disease.

A thorough examination by one of our vets will help identify the body system involved and guide the appropriate medical care your dog will benefit from.

6. Changing nutritional needs

Many older dogs benefit from a review of their regular diet, to ensure that their changing nutritional needs are being supported.

For some pets, this is as simple as switching them to a prescription Senior diet formulated with high-quality, digestible proteins and clinically-proven antioxidants and

essential fatty acids, combined with reduced overall calories to prevent unhealthy weight gain with naturally decreasing activity levels.

Other pets, depending on their particular health requirements, may benefit from “sensitive stomach” diets for easier digestibility and stool support, or prescription diets to support organ health and wellness.

Keeping your dog in the best possible comfort and health will not only help to guarantee their best quality of life but will also help to keep your four-legged family member by your side for adventures, cuddles and companionship for as long as possible.

For more questions on senior dog health, consult the Beach and Bay Vet team: contact the clinic on 4363 2222 or info@beachandbayvet.com.au