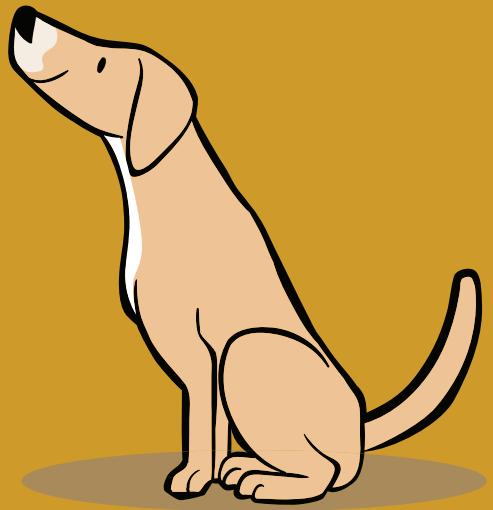


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VETERINARY & EXOTICS CLINIC



## SENIOR DOG CARE GUIDELINES: TIPS FOR PET OWNERS

As dogs age, their needs change & making appropriate adjustments to their diet, activity and daily routine will go a long way to ensure they stay well and comfortable for as long as possible.

If you are a pet owner wondering how to care for your aging furry friend, we have compiled a list of guidelines to help you.

\*\* Please note that every dog is unique. These guidelines are just a starting point.

Consultation with our veterinarian is always recommended to provide specific preventive healthcare for your pet.

### How often should senior dogs visit the veterinarian?

While annual wellness checks are recommended for puppies and adult dogs, senior dogs need more frequent visits.

According to the \*Senior Care Guidelines for dogs issued by the American Animal Hospital Association, senior animals should visit a veterinarian **every six months**. This is because senior dogs age faster than humans, and a lot can change in a short period of time.



## **Which signs should not ignore in my senior dog?**

Aging dogs can experience a range of physical and mental changes that can be difficult to differentiate from disease symptoms.

If you notice any of the following clinical signs, you should take your senior dog to the veterinarian immediately:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Increased panting or difficulty breathing
- Increased or decreased appetite or thirst
- Increased or decreased frequency of urination or sudden accidents in the house
- New masses, especially quickly growing ones
- Significant, sudden, or worsening lethargy
- Unwillingness to engage in normal activity
- Collapse
- Seizure
- Distended belly or one that looks more 'full' than normal.

## **Pain, can be difficult to detect in stoic dogs.**

### **Signs of pain include:**

- difficulty getting up from a resting position,
- lying or sitting in an odd position,
- limping or exhibiting stiffness,
- being unwilling to use stairs, jump in the car or jump up on the couch,
- constantly changing positions, or
- no longer wanting to be petted.

## **Things to discuss with my veterinarian?**

The following information is so useful for a veterinarian and owner to discuss during each visit/check-up, along with any other changes or concerns that you notice at home:

- Changes in your dog's routine or environment.
- Changes to your dog's physical activity or behaviour.
- Diet, treats, and supplements.
- Preventive or therapeutic medications your dog is taking.



## What does a veterinarian assess during my dog's physical exam?

During a physical exam, our veterinarian will assess your dog's overall health and wellbeing.

- This includes \* mental alertness, \* attitude, \* energy level, \* mobility, and \* breathing patterns.
- The vet will also take vital parameters such as \* weight, \* temperature, \* heart rate (pulse), and \* breathing rate (respiration).
- They will assess \* overall body condition, \* muscle condition, and \* any areas of discomfort.

And the vet will also check out each body system in detail, including the \* eyes, ears, mouth, teeth, nose, throat, lymph nodes, \* lungs, heart, abdomen, \* external genitalia, rectum, \* skin and coat, \* limbs and paws, \* muscles, bones and joints, and \* neurological system.

It may also be necessary for some routine diagnostic tests depending on each specific case i.e if exposure to Ehrlichia is likely.

It may also be wise to check things like: a complete blood count, chemistry, urinalysis, and faecal analysis, to detect any abnormalities & then, treat accordingly.

The need, or frequency, of these checks can be discussed with your vet in your pet's specific case.

## What vaccinations should my senior dog receive?

The veterinarian working with you & your pet is the best person to recommend vaccinations for your senior dog, as each dog's needs are unique.

Factors such as exposure to other dogs, grooming and boarding frequency, environmental risk factors, medications, and health conditions may influence the decision to alter a senior dog's vaccine regimen.

## Dubai Municipality also requires that ALL cats and dogs are vaccinated for Rabies every year.

Pet cats & dogs must also have a microchip in order to be registered with the Dubai Municipality and obtain their Municipality Tag.

All **2F4P Club memberships** includes an annual vaccine and a comprehensive veterinary examination, which can identify any underlying health issues and allow for timely treatment.

(NOTE: this Tag follows the vaccination, not the calendar)



## **What Preventive Medications recommendations is there for Senior Dogs.**

To ensure your senior dog stays healthy, it is recommended that they receive year-round parasite control medication that protects against a host of parasites. Ticks are a common problem in the United Arab Emirates, with diseases like Anaplasmosis, Ehrlichiosis, and Babesiosis being prevalent.

It is essential to safeguard your pets (no matter their age) from these parasites and prevent them from entering your home. We have several veterinary-approved preventive products here in the UAE that are effective against both ticks and fleas.

**Discounts on Tick Treatment are also included in both 'Arabian Wolf' & 'ULTIMATE Arabian Leopard' Membership Levels.**

## **What supplements or diet should my senior dog be given?**

While there is no 'one-size, fits all' senior dog diet or supplement, your vet can help you determine the most appropriate diet and whether your senior dog needs supplements based on their health.

It is important to consult with your vet before making any changes or additions to your dog's diet or supplements.

**The 2F4P Club, Arabian Wolf package, includes a discount on food and supplements.**

## **Is dental care important for my pet?**

Maintaining good dental hygiene is crucial for senior dogs, as they are more susceptible to dental diseases due to the natural aging process.

Neglecting dental care for your senior dog can lead to various dental diseases such as gum disease, tooth decay, and even tooth loss.

Gum disease, especially, is a common dental problem among senior dogs, and if left untreated, it can contribute significantly to other health issues such as heart disease and kidney disease.

**'It is essential to note that dental disease in senior pets, can cause serious pain and discomfort as well as contributing significantly to other health issues ... leading to a serious and negative impact on their quality of life'**

As part of all **2F4P Club Membership packages**, a **full range of discounted veterinary services**, including dental scaling, are available greatly helping to support Senior Pets health and wellbeing.

We hope this helps explain all the ways we as vets and you as owners can work together to keep pets as happy, healthy and comfortable for as long as we all can.

*\*reference: American Animal Hospital Association. (2023). AAHA Senior Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats. Retrieved from <https://www.aaaha.org/aaaha-guidelines/2023-aaaha-senior-care-guidelines-for-dogs-and-cats/home/>*