

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

## **Cognitive Dysfunction: A Disease of Older Pets**

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

As we improve how well we care for our pets, we are seeing more and more of them living into their mid and late teens. This is due to better diets, dental care, spaying and neutering and vaccinations. But as pets live longer, other diseases become more common such as heart, liver and kidney disease, and cancer. With improvements in diagnostics and treatment options, even these diseases are not the threat they once were.

But a new threat has appeared – Cognitive Dysfunction or senility. Many older dogs suffer from problems such as loss of house training, trouble sleeping at nights but sleeping more during the day, pacing and acting lost in their own homes and loss of simple obedience training.

As dogs get older, many of them have health problems such as hearing loss, cataracts or organ disease that can mimic symptoms of senility. Your pet should have an exam and blood work done before assuming the problem is Cognitive Dysfunction. If health problems are not found or are controlled with diet and medications but your pet's behavior is still abnormal there are some other things we can try. There is a medication and a new diet to help older pets, by decreasing harmful "plaque" that can form in the brain. They may help your pet once again revert to the same level of mental function he was years before or at least stop the progression of this disease.

Many people assume that there is nothing you can do for a pet that is "just getting older," but often we can give medications for arthritis, fix teeth and now even treat senility that makes our pet act old.

Please contact us about a Geriatric Pet work up to check your older pet's health. Keeping your older pet healthy both mentally and physically can be a challenge, but it is often well worth it. After all the love they have given you, it is now time to pay some of that back. We can do blood tests for organ function and to check the thyroid gland. We can check your pet's teeth for painful abscesses and destructive gum disease. And now, we can even help your pet feel and act younger!

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If you have any questions, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾