

A close-up photograph of a woman with sunglasses and a gold hoop earring, smiling as she holds a brown dog. The dog is looking to the right with its mouth open and tongue hanging out, appearing happy. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

ADULT DOG CARE

VET SERVICES
HAWKE'S BAY

CARING FOR YOUR ADULT DOG

Now that your dog is in his or her adult stage, we need to start thinking about the changes you should expect to see, and the different approach we need to take.

FEEDING

You should be feeding a well-balanced adult dog food. Large bones are good to occupy your dog and to help with tooth care. Things we need to be looking out for during the adult years are any changes to appetite, this includes drinking as well. An increase in drinking can be the first sign of a medical problem, so it is very important to always take note. Always contact your veterinarian if you have noticed changes.

VACCINATIONS

As discussed during your other visits, as your dog ages, we can look at reducing the yearly vaccinations to every second year, but it is still very important to have a yearly health check. If you board your dog at a boarding facility, He/she will still need a yearly kennel cough vaccination.

WORM & FLEA

De-worming and de-fleaing is something you will need to continue on a regular basis. Throughout your dog's life they will be susceptible to both fleas and worms. Talk to your vet about which products best suit your dog and ask to go on our worm and flea programme. This takes the stress off you to remember and we send it directly to your home.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

It is very important as our dogs age that the weight they are carrying is not putting unnecessary strain on their joints. We have fantastic food products now that really do help to reduce weight in our dogs. Your dog being in his or her ideal weight range will help prolong a happy and healthy life as they age. Arthritis is very common from around 6 years on and carrying too much weight at any stage of life will speed up the onset of this disease.

Underweight dogs are also at risk and are more likely to suffer injuries as a result. If you have any concerns bring your dog into the clinic for a free weight check



COMMON DISEASES & SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis would be the number one disease we see. Our dogs slow down as they age, but there are many great products we can use to help keep them comfortable for as long as we can.

Things to look out for if you suspect your dog may have arthritis are:

- 1) Taking longer to get up from lying down.
- 2) Struggling to jump into the car or on to the couch.
- 3) Reluctance to play with other dogs, or fetch toys.
- 4) Bunny hopping with their back legs.
- 5) Swollen joints, lameness.



EARLY RENAL DISEASE

This is also a very common disease we see in older dogs. Renal disease is when your dog's kidneys are not working as well as they used to.

Symptoms to look out for are:

- 1) Excessive drinking and or urinating
- 2) Dehydration, sunken eyes, dry gums
- 3) Weight loss
- 4) Loss of appetite
- 5) Vomiting and or diarrhea

A simple blood and urine test will determine how well your dog's kidneys are working, and treatment consists of medication and a special diet. Once kidney disease is present, we can't fix it, but we can help slow the progression of the disease.

EARLY HEART DISEASE

Usually seen later on in adult life but can be seen earlier especially with certain breeds of dogs. We have effective medications for the treatment of heart disease, but once again it is slowing the progression of the disease, not fixing it.

Symptoms to look for:

- 1) Lack of interest in playing or exercising (exercising intolerance)
- 2) Shortness of breath
- 3) A wet cough, especially in the mornings
- 4) Weakness
- 5) Extending neck to breath
- 6) Blue to purple discoloration of the gums and the tongue.

By listening to the heart, we can pick up heart murmurs, but an x-ray for diagnostic purposes is usually advised.

LUMPS & BUMPS

We start to notice lumps, bumps and warts as our dog's age. Some are just fatty lumps, called lipomas, and unless they are causing problems to the dog we don't need to surgically remove them. But other lumps can be nasty and can spread quickly. If you notice any lumps, be sure to have your vet take a look at them. We can obtain a needle sample and have a look at the cells under the microscope. This will diagnose what type of lump or cancer we are dealing with and the action that is needed. Please note that in some circumstances your vet will advise that the cell sample be sent to the lab for examination. Remember that the larger the lump gets the more risks that are involved to remove it. So, catching and removing (if needed) these lumps as early as possible gives your dog the best chance for a happy and healthy life.

DENTAL DISEASE

Dental disease occurs as our dogs age due to the buildup of dental plaque on the teeth. This process causes inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) which causes the gums to recede exposing the tooth and the tooth root. With an exposed tooth root, bacteria can seed into the pulp cavity and root producing an abscess. Chronically infected teeth can cause severe pain, changes in eating habits, bad breath, loss of teeth, loss of body condition, and the bacteria within the plaque can serve as a source of chronic infectious material that can affect other organs of the body such as the heart, liver and kidneys.

With each health check your dog has the vet will be looking at his or her teeth. Some dog breeds are renowned for having a much quicker onset of dental disease than others and need teeth cleaning on a more regular basis.

We have foods on the market that help prevent tartar build up, but please note these won't help if your dog already has tartar build up. We recommend once the teeth are clean to then change to a specific diet, as this will prolong the onset once again.

BLOOD & URINE TESTING

As our dogs age it is also a good idea to test urine and blood samples. Even if we think our dogs are happy and healthy. The results give us valuable information on things going on which we can't necessarily see.

We recommend from 8 years of age testing blood and urine samples. If everything comes back normal, this gives us base line values which we can then monitor as your dog ages and pick up on slight changes very early on.

Please don't hesitate to phone one of our vets if you have any concerns about your dog between visits to our clinic.