

THE DUPONT POST



BUT THAT'S NORMAL, DOC!

By Dr. Christina Leone

As pets age, they may show symptoms that owners may see as normal behaviors, but may actually be early indicators of disease. This article is aimed at discussing the most common symptoms I hear from owners and the most common diseases I treat.

1. "He's always been a vomiter, but that's normal, Doc! I think he just eats too fast." Vomiting should never be considered a normal behavior for a cat or dog if it is occurring on a frequent basis. For cats, this behavior can indicate dental disease, hyperthyroid disease, inflammatory bowel disease, a food allergy or intestinal cancer. Many cats have a type of condition in the mouth called "resorptive lesions." This is a condition where the root of the tooth is being "resorbed" or "eaten away" by the body. It is a painful condition and often to avoid pain, cats stop chewing, swallow the food whole and then regurgitate the food after. Hyperthyroid disease increases a cat's metabolism and causes cats to feel hungry and so they often consume large amounts of food, eat too quickly, and then vomit shortly after.

For dogs, this can often be a sign of an underlying food allergy or food intolerance, inflammatory bowel disease, intestinal parasites or cancer. It is important to bring up these symptoms in your veterinary visits, so that appropriate diagnostics can be performed.

2. "He pees on the carpet, but that's normal, Doc! He always does that when he's mad." Inappropriate urination can be an important clue of underlying metabolic, behavioral, or other aging conditions for both cats and dogs. If you notice your pet is drinking more water than before, the inappropriate urination may suggest kidney disease or diabetes. It also

may be a sign of a urinary tract infection, especially in an older patient. Another important condition to rule out is bladder stones. Both cats and dogs can develop bladder stones, and may never show symptoms, until they develop an infection. An abdominal radiograph (X-ray) can help to screen for stones. For older dogs, they also may lose bladder control. If the symptoms you are noticing occur when your pet is asleep, he or she may have urinary incontinence, which can often be treated with medication after infection and bladder stones are ruled not to be the cause.

3. "He sleeps a lot, but that's normal, Doc! He's just old." Well, maybe. As pets age, they will begin to sleep more hours of the day. They may be less likely to greet you at the door or rouse from a deep sleep, unless proper motivation, such as food hitting the food dish, is provided. However, if you notice your pet seems to slow on walks or seems apprehensive going up and down stairs or getting into the car, or if your pet has trouble making jumps he used to make easily, your pet may be suffering from arthritis. Aching joints can severely limit activity, though pets may mask this when they are very excited, and so may seem "normal" throughout the day. It is important to mention this so we can perform a comprehensive orthopedic exam on annual physicals and recommend appropriate treatments.

These are only a few of the things I hear from clients, however there are many more behaviors that you may notice at home that may be an early indication of a problem. It is important to bring up all seemingly "normal" behaviors with your veterinarian so that we can provide better care and keep your pet healthy for many years to come.

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Senior Pet Care

By Dr.
Margaret
Hollis

As our pets age, many things will begin to change on a physiologic level. You may notice behavior changes that you think are normal for an aging pet. As the body ages, organs start to decline and this can lead to changes in your pet's daily routine.

Some of the most common concerns I hear from clients are that their pet sleeps much more than before, is not as interested in playtime or has lost a normal amount of weight for an older pet. These are all normal changes but it's possible they are things we may be able to help with.

When you bring your older dog in for his geriatric exam, it's important that you discuss all behavior changes you have noticed and tell your vet all medications your pet may be on. In addition to an annual physical exam, an orthopedic or neurologic exam may be warranted. Bloodwork and urinalysis are two very important tests that we recommend annually in every pet over 7 years of age. The bloodwork provides a more accurate picture as to what is going on inside the body. Many owners think bloodwork is unnecessary, especially when it comes back normal. But this could not be further from the truth. Establishing a baseline is extremely helpful, as things might change in the future. We look at organ function and can identify early kidney disease, endocrine problems, or an infection that was not seen on physical exam.

One of the most common problems in older dogs is the onset of arthritis. We have come a long way in pain management. Any pet described as stiff or sleeping more can probably benefit from some sort of arthritis supplement. The first line of treatment is a glucosamine and chondroitin supplement. This improves joint health and any pet

that is athletic, has a previous orthopedic injury or known arthritis should be on a supplement such as Dasuquin.

The second line in arthritis management is the use of a type of drug called an NSAID, such as Rimadyl. This can have effects on the liver, so its use is best discussed with your vet, but it can be remarkable in terms of controlling the pain and inflammation of arthritis.

The last drug I would like to mention is Adequan. This is an injectable form of a joint fluid replacement substance. This is highly effective in treating advanced arthritis and is very safe. Many of our older patients are reaping the benefits of this drug and we can teach you how to give the injections at home.

Next, we will discuss the enigma of cats. It is so important that cats older than 7 years be examined at least once per year if not more. Cats are dynamic and their health status can change abruptly. Small and unnoticed weight loss in cats can be very damaging when trying to manage their chronic conditions. Annual bloodwork, urinalysis and blood pressure monitoring are important tests in cats. Many cats will develop kidney, liver, immune or thyroid conditions as they age. All of these conditions are harder to manage when they are discovered at a later stage. Once these have been diagnosed, it is important that the pet's health status be monitored up to four times per year depending on how quickly the condition is progressing. There are many options to treat cats with advanced diseases and more are being discovered each day.

In the end, it is very important to discuss with your veterinarian not only what will be

done in the exam room today, but what the monitoring protocol for the future will be.

Alternatives for Aging Pets

It is hard to watch our pets grow older. As our animals age and start to "slow down," we want to help them feel as good as they can for as long as they can. While there are many conventional diagnostic tests and medications that can help with this, there are some times when these conventional treatments do not provide comprehensive relief for your loved one.

For animals who are suffering from chronic diseases, such as thyroid, gastrointestinal, kidney, and joint diseases, Chinese medicine can be a gentle, effective and synergistic addition to their treatment. This medicine addresses not only the symptoms of a disease, but also the underlying imbalance in the body that allowed it to begin. We can integrate acupuncture, herbal, massage, and food therapy in with western treatments your pet may already be receiving to help achieve a greater quality and length of life for your loved one.

Even if your pet is not known to be suffering from a disease, Chinese medicine can be used to help your pet age gracefully and happily. This balanced approach to health is a wonderful option to treat problems before they are detectable on conventional lab tests and x-rays. In this way, Chinese medicine offers a beautiful preventative medicine approach to promote your pet's health.

If you are interested in exploring the benefits of Chinese Veterinary Medicine for your aging pet (or young pets as well) please contact the clinic and set up a consultation with Dr. Katie Stembler, DVM CVA.



Meet & Greet



Dr. Prociuous is a native New Englander, growing up in Connecticut, then spending many years in Boston, MA. She relocated to Washington, DC in the Fall of 2010. Veterinary Medicine is her second career, spending five years in research at a biotechnology company before attending veterinary school. After graduating from Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2004, she completed a yearlong internship at a specialty and emergency hospital in South Weymouth, MA where she gained experience in general and emergency medicine. Dr. Prociuous stayed on staff at this hospital after her internship, and she is grateful for this experience, as it allowed her to work with and learn from (in her opinion!) some of the best in their fields. She recently relocated to DC and joined the staff at Dupont Veterinary Clinic in September 2010.



Dr. Prociuous enjoys the challenge of a complex medicine case as much as she looks forward to getting your new puppy or kitten off to a healthy start in life. Outside of the clinic, Dr. Prociuous enjoys anything outdoors including hiking, time at the beach, and exploring her new city. In August she will be traveling with a World Vets team to Ecuador to participate in a volunteer spay and neuter program.

Dr. Prociuous approaches every case and patient with the belief that all animals deserve to live a healthy and comfortable life. She looks forward to working with you in achieving this goal for your canine and feline family members!

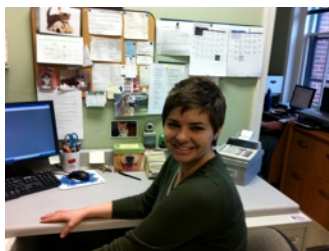
Dr. Saini is from Michigan and recently relocated to the DC area this past September 2010. She comes to Dupont Veterinary Clinic with a strong interest in surgery, dentistry, and internal medicine. She holds a BS degree in Biology with a minor in Business Administration.



Immediately after her undergraduate studies, she joined Tuskegee University's School of Veterinary Medicine and graduated in 2009. Dr. Saini worked at the Michigan Humane Society in Detroit for a little over a year prior to moving to DC.

She recently got married to Vikram Nath in June 2010 and she's enjoying every minute of married life! In her spare time, Dr. Saini loves to travel and try different cuisines of the world. She has been to England, France, Italy, Greece, and India, just to name a few. There are still many more places she wishes to see and food she wants to eat! She currently has one dog, Raja, a 14 year old Golden Retriever Mix. As a child, she tried to make every animal she found her pet. She even convinced her parents to let her keep a caterpillar, which she named Sticky. Dr. Saini was a lucky girl because her parents adopted most of the pets she wanted: dogs, cats, turtles, hamsters, guinea pigs, fish, and birds.

She is still exploring her new city; don't be surprised if you see her on the weekends at the monuments and museums! Dr. Saini loves meeting new people and their pets and is excited to be a part of the DVC team!



FRONT DESK GETS A FRESH, NEW FACE!

Be sure to welcome Whitney Collins to Dupont Veterinary Clinic at your next veterinary visit. Whitney is originally from Oklahoma. After finishing college, she spent one year with AmeriCore and was active in disaster response. Following this, she moved to Washington, DC to pursue a career in massage therapy. Desiring a career change (and client change!) she joined DVC in December 2010. She loves working with animals and with pet owners, and is excited at the prospect of adopting a pet of her own.



SENIOR PET HEALTH AWARENESS

As part of our effort to promote senior pet health, Dupont Veterinary Clinic is offering a senior care package for both cats and dogs. Our goal is to promote earlier detection of common canine and feline conditions so as to implement treatments sooner that lead to a longer, healthier life.

Too often, pet owners believe there is nothing that can be done for their aging pets to improve their pet's well-being or pet owners may misinterpret signs of disease for signs of aging and thus may not seek medical attention for their pet until the disease has progressed too far along.

The staff at Dupont Veterinary Clinic is dedicated to helping owners better understand the unique needs of their aging pet. Together, we can work to provide better quality of life for your pet as he or she ages. Please clip the coupon below or bring this page in with you at your next visit.

Dupont Veterinary Clinic

2022 P ST NW
 Washington, DC 20036
 (202) 466-2211

Hours:

Monday	8 AM - 8 PM
Tuesday	8 AM - 8 PM
Wednesday	8 AM - 8 PM
Thursday	8 AM - 8 PM
Friday	8 AM - 6 PM
Saturday	9 AM - 5 PM*
*Doctor Hours	9 AM - 1 PM
Sunday	10 AM - 1 PM

Hospital Director

Dr. Margaret Hollis, DVM

Associate Veterinarians

- Dr. Christina Leone, DVM
- Dr. Laura Mitterman DVM
- Dr. Sherry Prociou , DVM
- Dr. Darleen Saini, DVM

Veterinary Acupuncturist

Dr. Katie Stembler, DVM, CVA

DUPONT VETERINARY CLINIC

202-466-2211

Good for one healthy pet comprehensive labwork screening at a cost of \$200. Includes CBC, Chemistry, T4 & Urinalysis.

Physical Exam fee is NOT included
 Expires April 30th, 2011



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 2022 P ST NW
 Washington, DC 20036