

# Your Senior Pet: Care for Them Today for a Better Tomorrow

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Whether you are getting ready to adopt an adult beagle or your favorite kitty is getting on up in years, you have to prepare for their care as a senior. Fortunately, this isn't all that challenging. With a few changes to their diet and your family's routine, you'll have a healthy, happy pet for the long haul. [Nittany Beagle Rescue](#) offers the following tips.

## Pay attention to what goes into their body.

Just like humans, pets react differently to food with age. This means that their favorite kibble now may not be the best option for them as they grow older. If your pet is prone to obesity or has digestive issues, a reduced-calorie food or one with higher fiber may be a better option. The Clinical Nutrition Services Department at Cummings Veterinary Medical Center notes that, despite popular belief, [reduced protein isn't necessary](#). Further, a diet lower in phosphorus may have little to no impact on an animal in overall good health.

In addition to food and supplements, you'll also need to keep a close eye on your dog or cat's [water intake](#). Specifically for dogs, they should drink anywhere from .5 to 1 ounce of water each day for each pound they weigh. For example, a 20-pound beagle would need between 10 to 20 ounces of water depending on their activity level. If you notice that your animal is drinking excessively more or less, they may be suffering with issues such as [thyroid disease](#) or a fever.

## Talk to your vet about potential health problems.

Speaking of diseases and fevers, there are plenty of health issues that plague older animals. Hill's explains that things like hearing and vision loss, dementia, heart problems, and incontinence are all [common](#) in geriatric pets. Depending on your animal's breed, they may be more prone to some than others. Establish a relationship with your veterinarian, and plan to increase their number of wellness visits once they reach the senior stage, which your vet can help you determine. In light of more visits to the veterinarian, you can offset costs by signing up for a pet insurance plan, which is available for both [dogs](#) and cats. When looking at [basic coverage](#), consider deductibles, age restrictions and potential discounts.

## Make fitness a priority.

After consulting with your pet's veterinarian, you'll also want to increase their [activity level](#). You can do this by going for walks together or playing fetch in the yard. If your animal is not used to exercise or is recovering from an accident or surgical procedure, start slowly. Make sure they have a comfortable place to walk. Stay away from [hot pavement](#) in the summer, extremely rocky terrain, or freezing surfaces during the wintertime. Keep things interesting by switching up your activities. You might, for example, visit the dog park one day and surprise them with a new toy the next.

## Keep them comfortable.

[Your dog](#) may experience issues like arthritis and reduced mobility with each passing year. Keep them comfortable by providing an orthopedic bed, ramps instead of stairs to get on the bed or couch, and, with the guidance of your vet, nutritional supplements to ease joint inflammation. A massage, acupuncture, and a warm towel or blanket can also provide relief and comfort.

Remember, puppies and kittens do not stay that way forever. At some point, they are going to become a senior pet. It is your responsibility as their provider and caregiver to continue to meet both of these obligations no matter how many years may pass. From feeding them the right foods to making fitness a priority, there are many ways you can care for your senior pet while enriching both their life and yours.

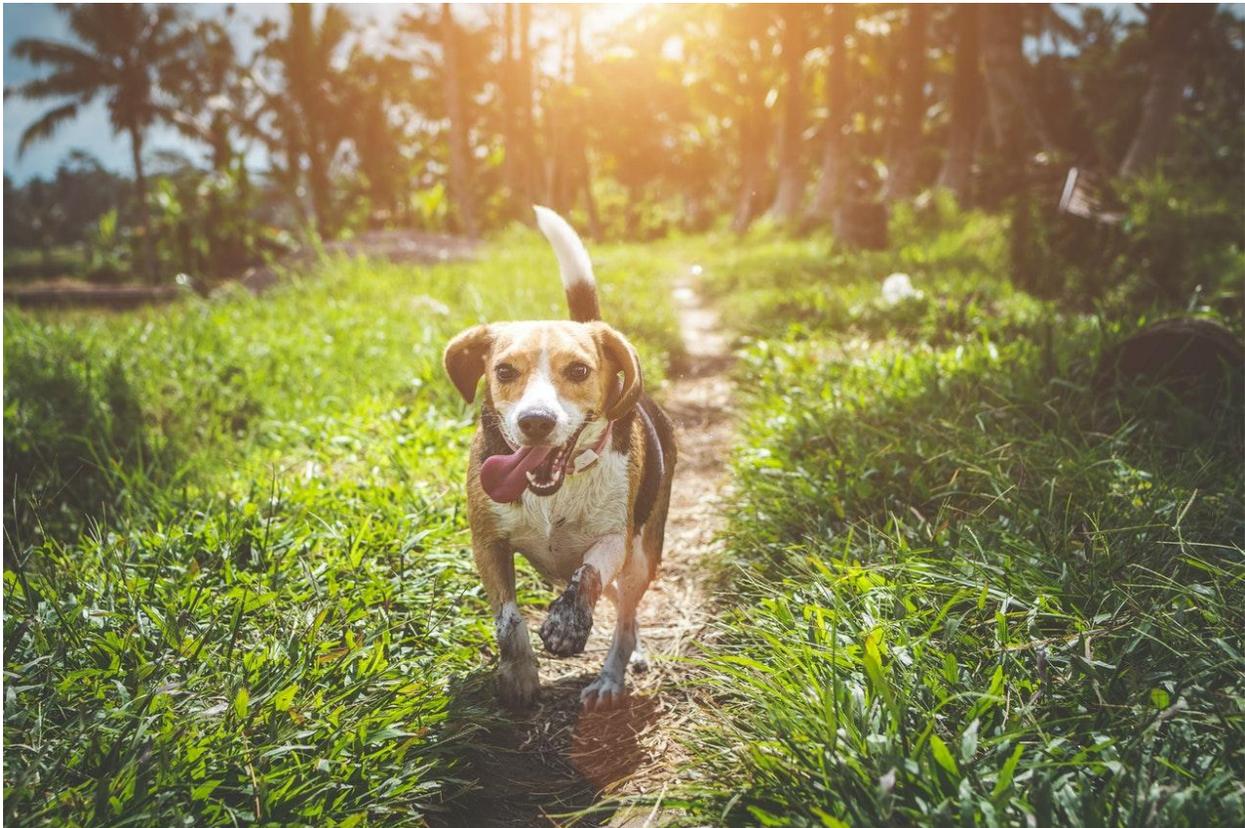


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