# Caring for Older Pets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient/Pet</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Oldest Seen</th>
<th>Best Care Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>8-18 years</td>
<td>21 y (Terrier Mix)</td>
<td>Exam/Vaccines, Neuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Up to 15-19 years</td>
<td>23 y (DSH)</td>
<td>Exam/Vaccines, Inside only pet, Neuter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>Up to 25-30 years</td>
<td>43 y (Quarter Horse)</td>
<td>Exam/Vaccines, good husbandry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbits/GP/ Hamsters</td>
<td>Up to 2-5 years</td>
<td>6 -7y (GP/Rabbit)</td>
<td>Exam, good husbandry and sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbits/GP/ Hamsters</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 y (Hamster)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Avian</td>
<td>Species vary 8-100y</td>
<td>35-40y (Psittacine)</td>
<td>Exam, good husbandry and sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles (turtle)</td>
<td>Up to 100+ years</td>
<td>75y (SD Zoo)</td>
<td>Exam, good husbandry and sanitation</td>
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1) **Pet Life Expectancies** These are just estimates for the lifespan of your pet depending on the care preventative medical services given to them from cradle.
2) **Vaccines** The vaccine programs available to your pet are to be discussed with your veterinarian and depend on the risk/benefit exposure.

3) **Diseases** There are many diseases that maybe seen in cats/dogs and other pets. These diseases are based on species, breed, geographical location, lifestyle of the pet and genetics.

4) **Injuries** Can occur unexpectedly and should be addressed immediately with your veterinarian. The veterinarian may, based on the initial examination, decide to monitor the injury, treat symptomatically or treat aggressively.

5) **Diagnostics** Routine, age related, diagnostics are to access the metabolic and organ functioning for the individual patient. Analysis of kidney, liver, adrenal, intestinal functioning gives indication of disease. These tests are not absolute, may have to be repeated or additional tests may be needed to support a tentative diagnosis.

6) **Medical Testing** Early blood and urinalysis may alleviate the need for immediate medications, surgery or other invasive treatments. In some cases, early testing may result in a simple diet or lifestyle change to support an improved lifestyle.

7) **There are many critical signs or symptoms that should not be overlooked:**
   a. Vomiting for more than 24 hours
   b. Failure to pass urine of feces
   c. Difficulty breathing
   d. Head pressing against a wall, excessive drooling
   e. Bleeding that can’t be controlled with pressure
   f. Excessive drinking or urination (blood in urine)
   g. Vaginal or penis discharge
   h. Unable to stand, sit or find a comfortable position
   i. Open or bleeding tumors or masses

8) **Lumps, bumps, masses and tumors**
   a. May be internal or external
   b. Cannot be diagnosed without laboratory analysis
   c. Biopsy give the best chance to help
   d. Always consult a veterinarian for direction
   e. Be concerned if lump is painful, bleeds, has a bad odor grows quickly

9) **Euthanasia is the final treatment and often the kindest.**

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10) Pet disaster survival
   a. Include ID, pictures, license and vaccine certificates
   b. Always have transport cages, leashes and necessary food ready
   c. All medications should be readily available
   d. FIRST AID KIT
      i. Bandages, white clean socks, tape
      ii. Square gauze, gauze rolls, triple antibiotic ointment
      iii. Plastic sealable bags, cotton balls
      iv. Blankets, clean sheets
      v. 70% ethanol, hydrogen peroxide
      vi. Learn pet CPR
      vii. Pet First Aid book (may available online)
      viii. When possible, after and first aid problem seek the advice of a veterinarian

11) Conclusions and Thoughts
   a. Trust your veterinarian, not every problem can be solved with one or two visits, one treatment or one pill. Follow up is essential when requested by the veterinarian.
   b. Some diagnosis will need to be referred to a specialist either for special expertise (oncology medications) or additional testing instruments not available to the general practitioner. (e.g. MRI/CT/ophthalmology slit lamp etc.).
   c. Be prepared for disaster.
   d. See your veterinarian at least ONCE YEARLY.
   e. Keep monitoring your pet daily for external parasites, bowel, urination habits. Monitor for coughing, sneezing, vomiting and diarrhea.
   f. Massage your pets to monitor for masses and tumors.

NOTES:
No matter how many years we get with our dog, it is never long enough.

NOTES: