

Veterinarian Dr. Eugene Aversa, DVM, Explores Senior Pet Care as Dogs and Cats Live Longer, Healthier Lives

Dr. Eugene Aversa, DVM, a General Practice Small Animal Veterinarian with over two decades of experience, is guiding pet parents through the realities of aging pets.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Jul 30, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - As advances in veterinary medicine, nutrition, and preventative care continue to lengthen the lifespans of companion animals, caring for senior pets has become an increasingly important responsibility for pet owners. Dr. Eugene Aversa, DVM, a General Practice Small Animal Veterinarian with over two decades of experience, is guiding pet parents through the realities of aging pets. With practical, compassionate, and medically sound advice, Dr. Aversa is helping owners adjust to the evolving needs of their cherished senior dogs and cats.

While it may seem like just yesterday your pet was a rambunctious puppy or curious kitten, many pet owners are now navigating the gradual transition into their pet's golden years. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the age at which a pet is considered "senior" can vary. Larger dogs may begin to show signs of aging as early as six years old, while smaller breeds may not be considered senior until around ten or eleven. Cats typically reach senior status by age ten.

As this transition takes place, Dr. Aversa urges owners not to be passive observers but informed participants in their pets' aging journey. "Aging is natural, but suffering doesn't have to be," he says through his clinical perspective. He emphasizes the power of early detection, proper care, and maintaining a nurturing home environment.

Recognizing the Signs of Aging and Responding Proactively

Dr. Aversa outlines five key focus areas in senior pet care that every pet owner should monitor. These pillars form a strong foundation for ensuring comfort, mobility, and mental sharpness in aging pets.

1. Increased Veterinary Care

Dr. Aversa recommends senior pets be seen by a veterinarian at least twice a year. These semi-annual exams go beyond basic check-ups. They provide a chance to detect age-related illnesses before they escalate. Chronic kidney disease, arthritis, diabetes, thyroid imbalances, and cancer are just a few of the conditions that may begin to appear silently. Earlier diagnosis often leads to better outcomes, less invasive treatment options, and improved quality of life.

"These animals have supported us throughout their lives. It's our responsibility to return the favor with consistent medical care," says Dr. Aversa.

2. Maintaining Mobility

Mobility issues are among the most noticeable and common challenges facing senior pets. Dogs may become reluctant to go for walks, climb stairs, or jump into the car. Cats might stop jumping onto their favorite windowsills or begin to sleep in lower, less demanding locations. These behaviors often signal arthritis or joint discomfort.

Dr. Aversa encourages pet owners to watch for subtle signs of pain and seek veterinary guidance. Joint supplements, pet-specific pain medications, and supportive therapies may restore much of a senior

pet's comfort and independence. However, not all mobility changes are due to arthritis. "You must first rule out serious conditions like pain in other areas of the body, cancer, or tick-borne disease," he advises.

3. Dental Health Is Vital

Dental disease in senior pets is more than just a cosmetic concern. It can lead to serious systemic health issues. Dr. Aversa notes that many pet owners don't look inside their pets' mouths regularly, so problems like loose teeth, advanced tartar, and infected gums often go unnoticed until the pet is in pain.

Regular dental check-ups and cleanings, especially in the senior years, can have a transformative effect. Owners frequently report that after dental procedures, their pets eat better, are far more energetic, and experience less discomfort. Proper oral care is a significant, often overlooked piece of senior wellness.

4. Weight Control and Lifestyle Management

With age often comes decreased activity, and with it comes weight gain. "Obesity is a silent killer," Dr. Aversa explains. Senior pets are thought to have a lower caloric need due to slower metabolism and less activity. So, those well-meaning extra calories can add up quickly.

Excess weight can worsen joint problems, increase the risk of diabetes, reduce overall longevity, and decrease quality of life. Dr. Aversa recommends owners work closely with their veterinarians to design a tailored nutrition and activity plan. Simple changes, such as reducing treat frequency, switching to senior-formulated food, and engaging in appropriate short, consistent walks or play sessions, can make a meaningful difference.

5. Cognitive and Emotional Health

Just like humans, aging pets can experience cognitive decline. Owners may notice their pets forgetting familiar commands, getting lost in familiar areas, sleeping more during the day but pacing at night, or showing signs of anxiety and restlessness. These may be symptoms of **Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS)**, a condition akin to dementia in humans.

While there is no cure, Dr. Aversa highlights several interventions that may help. "Fish oil, quality nutrition, digestive enzymes, and select supplements like B vitamins and CoQ10 have shown promise," he explains. Beyond physical health, the emotional well-being of senior pets is equally vital. A calm, loving, and predictable home environment helps reduce anxiety. Dr. Aversa stresses the value of reassurance: petting, soft voices, and gentle routines can comfort pets facing cognitive changes.

Compassionate Care Through the Golden Years

Dr. Aversa's advice isn't about prolonging life at any cost. It's about improving the quality of the time our pets have. "Senior pets still want to love and be loved. With the right support, they can enjoy their days, experience comfort, and continue to be joyful companions."

He urges all pet owners to observe behavior changes, ask questions during vet visits, and be open to new routines that accommodate a senior pet's shifting needs. Whether it's a new bed that's easier to get into, ramps for stairs, more frequent bathroom breaks, or even soft, easy-to-chew food, small adjustments can make a big impact.

Dr. Aversa's holistic view of veterinary care encompasses science and heart. It's about applying clinical knowledge while also meeting emotional needs with compassion.

About Dr. Eugene Aversa, DVM

Dr. Eugene Aversa is a General Practice Small Animal Veterinarian with more than 25 years of experience in diagnostics, medicine, surgery, and anesthesia. A graduate of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, he is known not only for his extensive clinical knowledge but also for his advocacy on behalf of animals. He has been a public voice for shelter pets and other animals through a self-produced weekly TV series and has marched in the nation's capital for the rights of all animals. He lives by a simple yet powerful mission: to protect, heal, and serve animals with compassion and integrity.

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