



# PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

ABN 15 989 957 221

7 Crescent Street Penguin 7316

Email: [penguinvet@gmail.com](mailto:penguinvet@gmail.com)

Ph: 03 6437 1331

[www.penguinvet.com.au](http://www.penguinvet.com.au)

## COMMON PROBLEMS IN OLDER DOGS.

### Early detection is the key!

There is so much we can do to help with arthritis, incontinence, 'bad smells', oily skin, erratic behaviour etc.

Watch for changes in appetite, toileting, coat condition, sight, hearing, mobility or an altered tone in your dog's bark.

1. **Vision** fades with the onset of lens-whitening. Look for a white shadow behind the pupil. This is a progressive but painless condition that does not worry dogs kept in safe familiar surroundings. Surgery IS possible.
2. **Hearing loss** can be dangerous, especially near roads. A high pitched whistle may help you get their attention. But sometimes we find wax or debris in the ear canal, or some other problem that can be easily cured!
3. **The Fur** may become lack-lustre, oily, smelly. Your dog may benefit from a vitamin//fatty acid food supplement (e.g. *Megaderm*), plus regular use of a follicle-cleansing shampoo (e.g. *Malaseb*). Bring them in: we'll provide a conditioning soak and show you what is possible!
4. **Appetite** may fall. Being less active, they need less food. Try a good quality concentrated 'senior' diet with less bulk, lower calories, high-quality protein, and enriched vitamin/mineral/fatty-acid mix e.g. Hills 'Mature Dog'
5. **Flattulence?** Again, rethink the diet, encourage more exercise, & try using charcoal biscuits, or probiotics.
6. **Excessive Thirst:** a dog that is drinking more may develop an overfilled bladder, & have 'accidents' overnight. There may be weakened **kidneys**, or perhaps **diabetes**. Bring us a urine sample for quick analysis.
7. **Incontinence** (damp patches left behind where the dog has been sitting) is different. A urine test is needed to rule out other problems. In females a hormone supplement can often restore sphincter tone; whilst males may be suffering lower-back arthritis. Occasionally the bladder will have slipped out of position: surgery can replace it
6. **Behaviour.** Older dogs do need to rest more, but they should not lose interest in life's excitements. Therapy for a **weakening heart**, **arthritis**, or **obesity** may help. Often a 'senior-friendly' diet may give you back your walk-mate. Snappiness or **aggression** is rarely due to 'getting old': it more likely it reflects pain, discomfort or disorientation, which we will be able to diagnose and relieve.
7. **Breathlessness**, lack of vigour, perhaps a **cough**, or 'snoring', can indicate a **weakening heart**. Please do have this assessed. Simple therapy may alleviate, or even reverse, the problem.
8. **Arthritis** will reduce mobility and cause hind-quarter 'weight-loss' . The dog may be stiff on rising, may limp, may become aggressive, or lose bladder control. We have a good co-ordinated approach to give relief, and hold regular "arthritis-evenings" to help clients. We can also help with weight reduction, warm bedding & a warm coat for overnight.
9. **Teeth** will inevitably get discoloured and build up tartar, which is *one* cause of "bad smells". There is a close relationship between bad teeth and kidney health. A 'bad' tooth may be causing aggression. Dentistry can benefit the overall dog.
10. **'Bad smells'** are often a mix of 'bad' teeth, gingivitis, urine spills, greasy fur & lack of exercise.

**Let's get rid of all that!**