

Cognitive Dysfunction: Client Handout

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Pets are living longer and longer because of improvements in veterinary care and nutrition. As pets age, their owners may notice cognitive dysfunction, the medical term for changes that may indicate some loss of mental sharpness. Dogs and cats cannot be precisely diagnosed with senility or dementia: however, changes in their brain mimic some of the changes seen in humans with these conditions. When a pet exhibits some of the following symptoms, your veterinary health care provider can help with treatment options.

DOGS	CATS
Changes in sleep patterns	Changes in sleep patterns
Loss of housetraining	No longer using the litterbox
Increased anxiety	Excessive vocalization
Loss of alertness	Loss of alertness
Changes in level of aggression	Changes in level of aggression
Not wanting to play	Isolating themselves

What some consider aging may be a disease state that can be helped with intervention with one of the many treatments now available and make an aging pet feel better.

Treatments for some of these disorders vary from simple behavioral modifications, to supplements or diet changes, to drugs. Discuss the options with the veterinarian, who will likely want to check for underlying problems that may cause or worsen cognitive dysfunction. What some consider aging may be a disease state that can be helped with intervention with one of the many treatments now available and make an aging pet feel better.