

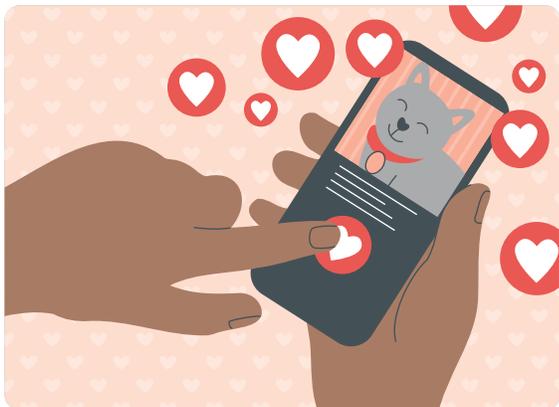
Roll Out the Red Carpet *for your practice's senior patients!*

As the “front of the house,” you can make senior pets and their families feel instantly at home—and show them they matter just as much as puppies and kittens. Try these tips for a senior-friendly experience:



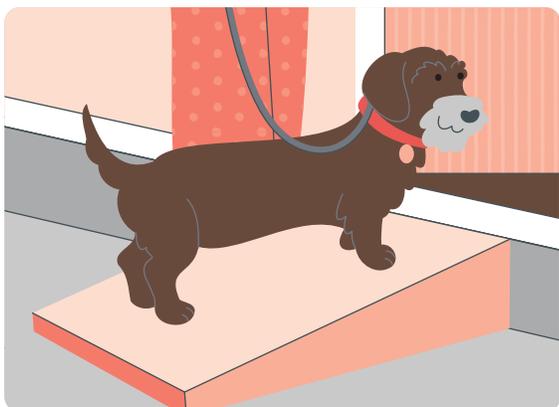
Make sure to update photos in their patient profiles.

Aging is a privilege – let your patients show off by offering to snap a pic in the waiting room or exam room while they wait to check out.



Repurpose those photos for social media.

Sweet senior pet photos are pretty hard to scroll past. Plus, by highlighting seniors on your social, other families with seniors will know you're a safe bet (and maybe remember it's time to make an appointment).

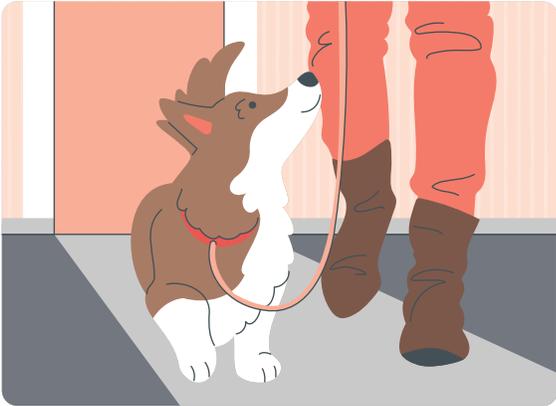


Chivalry isn't dead.

When you know a geriatric pet is on the schedule, get props ready. Smaller gestures can make an enormous difference in an older pet's visit, like inexpensive yoga mats in the waiting room, orthopedic beds in the exam room, ramps for getting over curbs and in and out of cars, and, for the most limited mobility patients, rooms closest to the door to avoid having to walk too far.

Food is emotional – that’s the difference. Nobody’s putting flea control on themselves, but they are eating, and it can be a very emotional subject.

—VICKY OGRAIN, MBA, RVT, VTS (NUTRITION)



Take good notes.

You’re in a position of power in the waiting area or at the front window, because you see patients when they’re moving more naturally and when they’re with the people they trust. Watch how they walk around the parking lot, squat on the grass, get in and out of vehicles. If they’re small and in carriers, listen for vocalizing that signals stress, make sure they’ve got soft liners for creaky joints, and gently hint at anti-anxiety measures such as supplements, pheromones, medication, and training that may make visits less stressful. If they ask: yes, you can teach old dogs (and cats) new tricks!



Are seniors your superpower?

Don’t let the appointment experience end when they leave. Older pets and their families can leave both sick and well visits with a long list of instructions, a bag of medications, or some hard choices to make. By calling, emailing, or even texting to check in within a day or two, you can make them feel less alone, empathize and reassure them if they’re feeling overwhelmed, and answer or pass on questions they might be hesitant to ask.



Emotions matter.

Talk with your team about other ways you can work together to ease the emotional burden of having a senior pet. Most of us have lost a loyal friend we thought we couldn’t live without, and it’s all too easy to put ourselves back there again when we see how hard even talking about joint supplements or a senior diet can be for clients with pets they are terrified to lose.