Caring for an Older Dog

As dogs get older their needs will change and they may become more prone to sickness. In order to insure the older dog’s comfort, remember the following:

- Routine is important to older dogs. Without it, they become confused.
- Dogs become accustomed to a certain size and type of food. They also expect their food dish in the same spot and to be fed at a regular time.
- If dogs are overweight, they may die prematurely because degenerative diseases develop faster. Diets should be low in calories.
- If dogs are too thin, they should receive a high calorie diet and see a vet. They could have an infection, blood disorder or parasites.
- Always have water available. Fluids are important for older dogs because water carries waste through the kidneys.
- Vitamins and minerals are vital for an older dog’s metabolism.
- Watch the older dog carefully for signs of illness. Symptoms of illness become less conspicuous as dogs age.
- Avoid exposing dogs to a chill. It might reduce their resistance to disease. If dogs do get a chill, heat from a hot water bottle or a blanket should be used to raise the temperature to a normal level.
- If dogs are healthy, include daily exercise in their schedule.

For more information on canine health, visit www.akc.org.