

But the kennel must have made him sick...

In reality, no one person can make your pet ill. Your kennel is responsible to provide a clean, safe environment and monitor the health of the pets left in their care. Unfortunately, a kennel has no way of preventing a pet from becoming ill from the effects of stress.

Caring for older or stressed pets

Most kennels have steps in place to help your pet cope with stress. Often these pets are provided with additional attention, extra bedding, soft music, or a special boarding area away from the general pet population. Special diets can be prepared to meet the nutritional needs of a senior pet, or you may choose to provide the food of your choice.

Your ABKA kennel wants your senior pet to go home happy and healthy. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a dog or cat to become stressed, which can result in illness. Your kennel is prepared for these situations. Discuss your pet's individual needs and health conditions in advance, along with what to do if something changes.

Remember, your ABKA kennel owner is in the business of boarding because he loves animals. He or she wants boarding to be a pleasant experience for you and your senior pet.

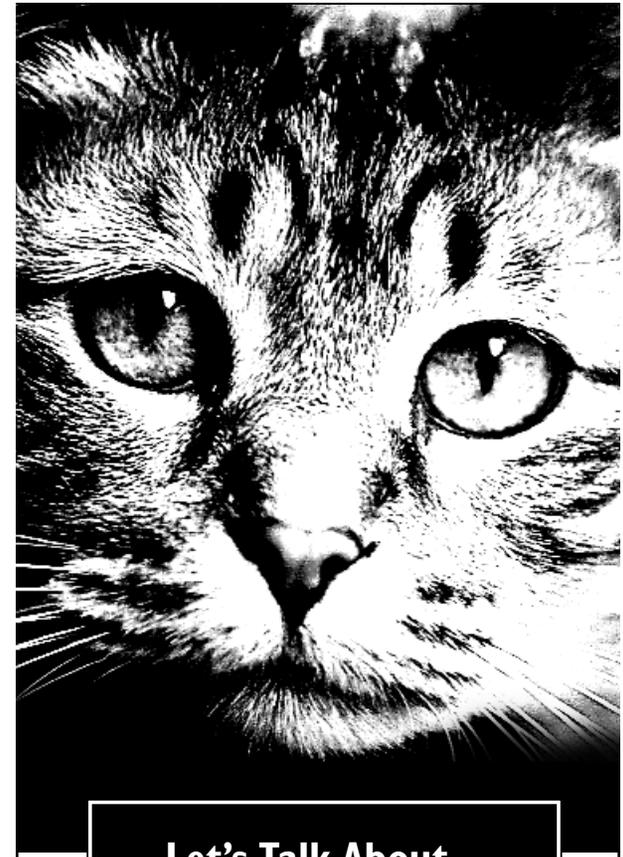


A nonprofit organization dedicated to the betterment of the pet care industry

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Let's Talk About...

Boarding

**Geriatric
Pets**

Being away from home can be more stressful for older pets than for younger ones. They are more set in their ways, and their patterns more deeply ingrained. Dogs and cats love patterns—knowing what is going to happen, and when—and changing those patterns can be upsetting to them.

Additionally, geriatric pets are more likely to have underlying health problems. Deafness and blindness are not uncommon in senior pets. Kidney, heart, and liver disease are often associated with age. Arthritis and other degenerative conditions can make it difficult for them to get around. Boarding, especially if your pet has never been boarded or boarded infrequently, may cause these conditions to become apparent or worsen.

Planning to Board

Speak with your kennel personnel regarding the care of your geriatric pet. Perhaps the kennel has a special area where older pets stay, or maybe they offer special services for senior pet care.

Be honest about any known medical condition your pet may have. The kennel staff will be better able to recognize problems with a particular condition if they know what to look for. Special care may need to be taken handling or feeding the pet as well.

Take along all medications your pet may need during the stay. Be sure they are all labeled appropriately. If your dog or cat is on several medications or a complicated dosage schedule, a small chart or calendar showing the medication(s) schedule may help staff to keep the treatments on time. Be sure your pet's vaccinations are all up to date.

Leave the kennel an emergency number where you can be reached, as well as your veterinarian's name and number. If a problem arises during your pet's stay, personnel must be able to reach you or make a decision based on your requests. If the kennel must seek veterinary care for your pets, be aware that you, as the owner, are financially responsible for your pet's treatment.

Why could my senior pet become ill? He was fine when I left him!

Many older pets have underlying conditions or undiagnosed illnesses that are not readily apparent. Stress plays an important role regarding your pet's health.

Stress can be caused by a variety of factors: being away from home and loved ones, a new environment, other dogs and cats, new noises, smells and people associated

with a kennel, a change in food or water...the list goes on. Whatever triggers a stress reaction also triggers physical changes in your pet.

The pituitary gland releases a hormone called ACTH into the bloodstream, which in turn signals the adrenal glands to release epinephrine and other natural steroids. Each of these products serves to get the body ready to react (the old fight or flight pattern). So the hormones have effects on various body systems. For example, blood pressure increases and the heart has to work harder; the kidney and urinary systems slow down; the immune system, which fights off disease and infections, shuts down temporarily. We may see physical signs of vomiting, diarrhea, lack of appetite, lethargy, or increased respiration.

Stress helps animals (and people) cope with a situation. However, when stress is not relieved or reduced sufficiently, the body does not have a chance to rest and cleanse itself of the excessive hormones. The possibility of shut down or failure of one or more body systems becomes greater as the stress continues, especially if there is any underlying or previous disease. Since the immune system stops working, even bacteria or viruses that might not normally affect your pet can now cause illness. This is why your pet can become ill away from home, even when he or she appeared normal when you dropped them off.