

He's Doing Well for his Age! **ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE**

Article WS122/07

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He's doing well for his age!

I walked by a shop the other day and overheard a lovely snippet of Oxfordshire village chat. The old Labrador was shuffling patiently at the end of his lead. “.... *he's 11 years old, you know. He's a bit rickety on his legs but he can walk to the shop. He's very good for his age!*”

What on earth does that mean? Since when did old age become a disease? How often do we accept that our dogs fall apart gradually, as they become older? They seem to die in instalments, saving just a little of that poor old body until the last great inevitable day. Why do we accept that?

Old age is NOT a disease in my book. Yes, things change and yes, they may deteriorate a little. The ‘spark’ should burn just as brightly, though and the body should be able to stay in one piece, to convey the spirit, with appropriate dignity, into its next existence. We should be able to ‘keep body and soul together’, until such time as they have to separate.

That is the nature of my job. It is the duty of all of us who care for animals. It is not just a matter for clever geriatric prescribing; it is a whole-life endeavour. It starts at a puppy's birth and its success depends upon management throughout life.

We should feed our dogs a [natural diet](#), not the modern processed foods, which have cleverly seduced us away from common sense with their oh-so-attractive convenience. This was the subject of an earlier article in the series.

Diet (nutrition) is very important. They should be brought up on raw meaty bones, especially shoulders, knuckles etc. (which are composed of spongy bone), rather than marrow bones (which are rich and very hard). In this way, their teeth and gums are kept healthy and they take in a perfect ‘mineral supplement’ for healthy and strong skeletal development, in a wholly natural way.

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We should keep our pets trim and physically fit. The body thrives on challenge, of the right nature and in the correct moderation; *“if you don't use it you lose it!”* We should not be zealously walking our young pups. They should be given freedom to romp, but not forced formal walks until at least six months old. There are arguments for waiting longer, especially in the larger breeds.

We should consider, very heavily, whether to delay vaccination until a less sensitive stage of life, or even whether to use the homeopathic (homeoprophylactic – using [nosodes](#)) method instead.

Having painted this nice picture of healthy youth, leading to a sound basis for a healthy old age, I hear: *“What if my old dog is an arthritic cripple already, though? It's all very well talking about what I should have done, but what should I do now? Is it too late to do anything to help, now he's in his dotage?”*

It is never too late to try to help. Age can be a factor but only because the more time a dog can give us, the better chance we have of regaining some of the old vitality. Firstly, change the diet to a natural and unprocessed one, avoiding carrots unless they're [organic](#). Avoid even the manufactured foods, which pretend to a natural ethic, unless they're organic. Two or three well-known brands leap to mind, which sell on a 'natural ticket' but are sadly far from it. **Fresh food** beats tinned or bagged, any day. In this way, we are feeding the new skeleton, as it is formed. Even your very old dog is recycling and renewing his skeleton!

[Homeopathic](#) and/or [herbal](#) medicine have much to offer, by way of stimulating healthier bone and joint remodelling and relieving symptoms.

[Acupuncture](#) may help, as a result of its short-term pain control capability and its longer-term healing stimulus. It should be supported with a good [diet](#) and skilled [chiropractic](#) support, in order to ensure that the spine and pelvis are in correct alignment. If all else fails, conventional pain-killers can make life more comfortable, despite the side-effect risks.

N.B. Herbs, homeopathy, acupuncture or drug medicine must, by law, be provided by a veterinary surgeon. The [Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966](#) is the relevant legislation. It is recommended that you should visit a vet with skill in natural medicines, rather than buying off-the-shelf [products](#), which are marketed with enthusiasm and which have not been tailored especially for your dog.

See also: [Homeopathy for the Ageing Dog WS025-07.pdf](#)

Further Reading:

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Feed Your Dog The Natural Way, by Christopher Day - Chinham Publications

Homœopathic First-Aid For Pets, by Christopher Day – Chinham Publications

Homœopathic Treatment of Small Animals – Principles & Practice, by Christopher Day – C W Daniel

Christopher Day February 2001

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