

# **Pets and People**

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## **10 Questions**

**Welcome to this column concerning the welfare of our pets and the people who own them. I am blessed by the fact that I have the opportunity to treat my “patients” who are pets of my “clients”.**

**Keeping me grounded is my own dog “Colin”. Through him I am constantly reminded of the bond that connects pets and people. He is going to be thirteen years old soon and acts like a puppy frequently, although the physical changes are becoming more apparent.**

**Recently, I began a process of describing to myself all the characteristics of his essence that keep me wildly in love with him. Here a few: He is clever, handsome, crafty, athletic, unconditionally loyal, cute, intelligent, instantly forgiving, funny and a bunch of other great things.**

**My goal is to maintain his quality of life for as long as possible and when the time comes to say good-bye make a decision based on his welfare above my own. Easy to say...hard to do.**

**I have learned the value of being proactive about his health and wish all of you who have special relationships with the likes of “Colin” to ask yourselves the following questions:**

- 1. Does your dog or cat drink more water than it used to?**
- 2. Have you noticed any marked weight loss?**
- 3. Has it had any loss of mobility or visible stiffness?**
- 4. Have you felt any lumps or growths?**
- 5. Has your pet’s appetite changed?**
- 6. Does he or she greet you any differently?**
- 7. Is your pet vomiting regularly?**
- 8. Does he have problems climbing steps?**
- 9. Have your dog’s or cat’s sleep habits changed?**
- 10. Has your pet’s breath gotten worse over time?**

**In future articles, I will delineate what these changes may mean, however, it is definitely a good idea to follow some basic rules as your pet ages. Some pets show few outward signs of underlying illness as they grow older so it is important to follow some guidelines as he or she progresses in years.**

**Bi-annual physical exams are the foundation of a wellness plan. Remember, that pets age much faster than us, and a general guideline is 7 years of pet life for one of ours. The other basic components of the wellness plan are chemistry analysis of the blood, urinalysis, oral, dental, optic and otic examinations, dietary history as well as specific screenings based on the individual pet.**

**When you have any concerns about your pet's health or if any of the 10 questions are "yes", consult with your veterinarian and establish a wellness plan.**

**If you have questions that you would like addressed in future columns you can email me at [Manchestervet@comcast.net](mailto:Manchestervet@comcast.net). Additionally, many questions can be answered on my website: [www.Manchestervet.com](http://www.Manchestervet.com)**