

# SENIOR PET HEALTH CARE

*Make Senior Easier*



## COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME A DOG OWNER'S GUIDE

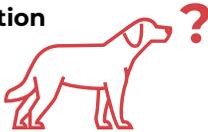
# What is cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS)?

---

CDS is an age-related condition affecting the brain of senior dogs and can cause symptoms similar to those seen in people with dementia.

The acronym DISHA describes the most common signs of cognitive dysfunction syndrome in dogs. Many of these signs are sometimes mistakenly considered a normal part of ageing:

## Disorientation



- Getting 'lost' in the house or on walks
- Difficulty negotiating obstacles
- Standing on the wrong side of door to go out
- Staring at walls, floor or into space

## Interaction changes



- Less willing to interact with you/ other pets
- Following you around the house
- Personality changes (e.g. more anxious, irritable)
- Reduced response to learned commands

## Sleep wake cycle



- More sleeping during the day
- Pacing, barking, whining at night

## House soiling



- Indoor toileting at random sites
- Stops signaling to go out
- 'Forgets' to toilet when outside

## Activity changes



- Aimless wandering or pacing
- Restlessness
- Apathy (loss of interest) and depression

# What causes cognitive dysfunction syndrome?

---

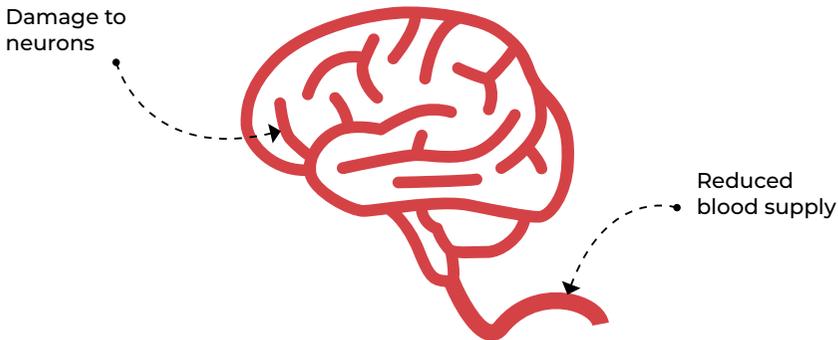
The two main causes of cognitive dysfunction syndrome in dogs are:

- **Reduced blood supply**

Age-related changes to your dog's circulatory (blood vessels and lungs) system reduces the brain's blood supply.

- **Free radical damage**

Normal chemical reactions within the cells of your dog's body produce molecules called 'free radicals'. These unstable molecules build up within your dog's brain gradually damaging the neurons (brain cells).



## How you can help your vet diagnose CDS

---

The behavioural changes associated with CDS will be most obvious to you, because you know your dog best. This makes you a vitally important part of the diagnostic process.

Keep a record of your dog's behaviours and tell your vet what you notice. Your vet will consider the information you give and examine your dog to rule out other health conditions.

*Almost a third  
of dogs aged 11  
show some signs  
of CDS<sup>1</sup>*



Many of the behavioural changes caused by CDS are understandably upsetting and can really affect the relationship you and your family have with your dog.

Seeking advice as soon as you notice any problems helps make sure that a management plan can be put in place as soon as possible.

## What your vet can do to help your dog

---

Age related behavioural changes are a sign your dog might benefit from medication. While these medications can't reverse the ageing process, they can help reduce some of your dog's behavioural signs.

## What you can do to help your dog

---

- Keep furniture in the same place
- Exercise your dog regularly in familiar places
- Allow your dog time to adjust to visitors
- Keep to a daily feeding and exercise routine
- Take your dog outside regularly to toilet
- Avoid stressful situations where possible (e.g. boarding kennels)

This educational material is brought to you by Animalcare Ltd, suppliers of Vitofyllin®. Vitofyllin contains propentofylline. Legal category: UK: POM-V. IE: POM. License number: 10347/4033(100mg) 10347/4032(50mg). To be supplied only on veterinary prescription. Further information is available on request from Animalcare, 10 Great North Way, York Business Park, Nether Poppleton, York, YO26 6RB

### References:

1. Neilson J. C., et al. Prevalence of behavioral changes associated with age-related cognitive impairment in dogs. 2001. J Am Vet Med Assoc. Jun 1;218(11):1787-91.