

Cognitive Decline In Dogs

November is National Senior Pet month. Senior dogs have always held a special place at That Newfoundland Place. Seniors are often great additions to a family and have a lot of love still to give.

Just as humans are prone to cognitive decline as they age, dogs can also experience changes in their memory and other cognitive areas. The changes may be subtle, but if you notice behavior that could be cognitive decline in your senior Newf, it's important to speak with your veterinarian. The earlier the signs are recognized, the better, as cognitive decline is a gradual, degenerative process. When treated early, it can be slowed down to preserve a dog's quality of life.

What Causes Cognitive Decline?

The human brain and the dog brain are anatomically similar. What we call Alzheimer's disease in humans is known as cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS) in dogs. A buildup of a protein called beta-amyloid forms plaques on the brain, which causes the sending of signals between brain cells (or neurons) to slow. The neurons become damaged and blood flow to the brain is reduced, interfering with memory, learning, and spatial awareness.

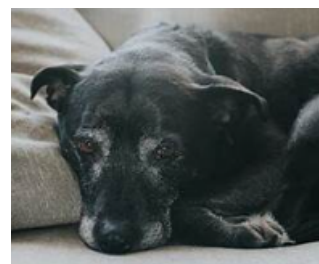
But a decline doesn't automatically mean CDS. It can also just be forgetfulness, just as it can be for humans.

What To Look For

As your Newf's brain wiring starts to misfire with age, you may notice several resulting behaviors.

Disorientation

Dogs with CDS may get "lost" in the home, especially at night. They may get



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Who's at TNP

Orion, now Oscar, was adopted by Danielle and David Dayo in New Hampshire and now has a Newf sister Annie. Watch for updates in future newsletters and the TNP Facebook page.



Noodle was adopted by Sue & Harry Shea of Connecticut after being fostered by Lori Babcock in New York. Look for updates in future newsletters and the TNP Facebook page.

Interested in adopting from TNP?

All dogs are placed only in APPROVED homes. Email Nancy for an application: nancy@thatnewfoundlandplace.org. Home checks are also required (virtual or in person).

Keep in mind that TNP places dogs in homes that are in the best interest of the dog, but welcomes applicants to express interest in dogs through TNP Facebook posts.

The Thankful Dog

I'm thankful for the day you adopted me. And your patience while I learned where to pee.
Sorry for the time I pooped in the hall. It was rough at first, but we got through it all.

You were so kind while I learned to behave, You showed me the world, so I could be brave.
I have all the things a good pup should own, Good food, fresh water and toys and bones.

Our house is warm and I have my own bed. But you don't mind if I share yours instead.
When I'm sick, you lay with me on the floor, With my head on your pillow, I let out a snore.

I'm thankful for all those rides in the car. And all the vacations we've shared so far.
From off-leash hikes to beaches with sand, So many adventures across this great land.

You take me for walks even when you are tired. And take time to play with me when I'm wired.

My barking and begging can be kind of a pain. And my 3am pee breaks are pretty insane.

Remember the times I got skunked in the yard? I was protecting my turf, just being on guard.
You try to see things through my point of view, Trust and respect bond us like glue.

The little things you do, they sure do rock! Like hiding my treats in a cardboard box.
I love your belly rubs when you scratch my chest But your sock balls at night are surely the best.

When I do good things, you praise me and clap. And you always make time for my nap on your lap.

The tricks you taught me are all very sweet, I'm thankful for you, can I have a treat?

Expert Excerpts

Roundworms

Roundworms are parasites that live in the dog's intestinal tract, where they feed on partially digested food. Most dogs will get roundworms at some point, as they are often passed from mothers to puppies during birth or nursing.

Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention

A fecal sample viewed under a microscope can determine the presence of roundworm eggs. A light infestation may not show any eggs in the fecal sample.

Your vet can provide a quality dewormer that will safely and effectively get rid of roundworms. Puppies are automatically dewormed as part of their first exam, as it is assumed they have the worms. If your female dog is pregnant, ask your vet about deworming treatment during pregnancy to reduce transmission to the puppies. Most monthly heartworm medications for dogs include ingredients to prevent and control roundworms.

Can humans get roundworms from dogs?

There are two main species of roundworms affecting dogs - *Toxascaris leonine* and *Toxocara canis*, which can be transmitted to humans. Transmission is similar to that of hookworm: skin coming into contact

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It's Hoodie Season

Order Your Cathy's Crew Gear

Cathy's Crew is a special project within TNP that ensures elderly or hard to home animals have a beautiful farm in Connecticut with space, resources, and love to safely live out their lives forever. The farm is the life work of animal rescue legend Cathy Derench who was the divine intervention to thousands of animals that found a new beginning because they crossed Cathy's path. All animals that have been rescued, crossed paths, or helped in any way by Cathy are part of Cathy's Crew. Hoodies available in black, pink, and orange. Bibs are available in black.

Hoodies are \$65, bibs are \$25.

Email Krisy@ThatNewfoundlandPlace.org with your size/color and address.



stuck in a corner or pace. Disorientation can also present as struggle to maneuver around objects, or stare blankly at walls, the floor, or into space. They may not recognize familiar people and be less reactive to sights and sounds, or struggle to find food dropped on the floor.

Interacting with others

You may notice your Newf interacts with others differently. They may be less interested in playing, greeting, or receiving affection from people. They may also be irritable towards children or other pets, when they weren't at a younger age.

Sleeping patterns

Cognitive decline can cause changes in sleep-wake cycle. Your dog may sleep more during the day and be restless at night. They may pace or vocalize in the middle of the night.

Potty accidents

An early sign of CDS is a house-trained dog that begins urinating or defecating in the house. House soiling can be caused by other medical problems so be sure to talk to your veterinarian about the change.

Anxiety

Dogs in cognitive decline may become anxious around humans or other pets. Changes in routine and unfamiliar environments may also cause anxiety when they did not before. You may notice your Newf startles easier or has new fears. A dog that is more anxious when you leave the home may be suffering from CDS.

Activity Level

You would expect your dog's activity level to decrease as they age, but if the opposite happens and they appear to have increased activity, cognitive decline may be the reason. Their increased feelings of irritability, anxiety and agitation may jack up their activity levels.

Some dogs, however, will appear withdrawn and depressed. They may have a decreased interest in exploring, even more than you would expect with normal aging.

with an area with infected stools. For this reason, it is important to pick up and remove feces right away. And wash hands frequently after being in areas you may have come in contact with stools.

If a human does become infected through the skin, the roundworms do not complete their full life cycle, but can still make humans very sick. If roundworm eggs are directly ingested, they hatch as larvae and can cause damage to organs and tissues.

Sources/More Information:

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/roundworms-in-dogs-symptoms-treatment-and-prevention/>
https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/parasites/resources/roundworms_hookworms.html



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Memory and Attention Span

Learning and memory may be challenging in dogs with cognitive decline. Your Newf may have a shorter attention span and may struggle to retain new information or forget what they have known for years. This can cause frustration for pet owners who think their furry friend just isn't listening, so if they are showing other signs of CDS, schedule an appointment with your vet.

How You Can Help

You can't reverse cognitive decline, but if it is caught early, you can slow it's progression.



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A Busy Brain

Engaging the brain will keep the brain circuits connecting. For your dog this means puzzle toys, sniffing on walks, training games, and other activities for mental stimulation. If you notice your Newf becoming stressed, end the activity on a positive note and try something different next time.

An Active Body

Exercise can also slow cognitive decline. In senior dogs this can be a challenge if mobility is compromised. Offer short walks, short training sessions or a game of tug. Anything that keeps the body moving. Keep the movements slow and gradual to keep joints from getting stressed.

Keep a Routine

Structure is reassuring and predictable for dogs. They know what to expect and they feel safe. Any disruption in routine, especially for dogs with CDS, can cause further confusion. Make sure your Newf always has access to water, food, and a bed and keep it in the same place.



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Set Your Dog Up for Success at Night

If your Newf struggles at night with restlessness, start a routine of massage and soothing petting to calm them for sleep. Nightlights near the floor in hallways and sleeping areas can help dogs who may become disoriented at night or wander. If excessive pacing is a problem, consider using doors or baby gates to safely confine your Newf. Sound machines can drown out nighttime noises that may disrupt her. Make sure your dog has a comfy place to sleep and train them to use it.

Supplements and Medications

Talk to your vet about supplements that can help dogs with cognitive decline. Certain antioxidants, melatonin, L-theanine, alpha-casozepine, and others can help with brain function, relaxation and other functions that can ease the symptoms of CDS. Your vet may prescribe medications, such as Selegiline (Anipryl), which can improve your dog's neuronal

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impulse transmission or suggest a special diet.

Regular Vet Checkups

As dogs enter their senior years, your vet will recommend bi-annual checkups and screenings. Seeing a vet twice a year doubles your Newf's chances that behavioral or physical symptoms related to cognitive decline can be detected early.

Make Sure Your Dog Has Identification

Dogs with CDS may wander from the yard or easily get lost in public outings. Don't leave a dog with dementia unattended. And make sure your Newf is microchipped and has an up-to-date ID tag.

Be Patient

Behaviors associated with CDS can be frustrating for owners. Scolding your dog for behaviors he has no control over will cause anxiety and stress.

Cognitive decline can be scary for you and for your Newf. Symptoms are likely to change over time. While brain function decreases with age for all mammals, being in tune with what could be "brain age" and behaviors that could be associated with Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome can help slow the disease and keep your dog happier and healthier for a little longer.

Resources/More Information

<https://pethelpful.com/dogs/behavioral-signs-of-cognitive-decline-in-dogs>

<https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/neurological/signs-of-dog-dementia>

<https://www.greymuzzle.org/resources/health-and-well-being-wellness-common-health-issues/7-tips-caring-dog-canine-dementia>

Is It Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome?

Symptoms can be present in many conditions, so it's important to schedule a visit with your veterinarian if you notice any symptoms of CDS.

Common conditions that share similarities with CDS are:

- Loss of hearing or vision
- Pain (and behavior change associated with it)
- Endocrine disorders (ex: hypothyroidism or Cushing's disease)
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease, urinary tract infections, or bladder stones
- Arthritis
- Brain tumors or epilepsy
- Anxiety or compulsive disorders

Sources/More Information:

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<https://www.greymuzzle.org/resources/health-and-well-being-wellness-common-health-issues/7-tips-caring-dog-canine-dementia>



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and supporters*

That Newfoundland Place



photo from dogflags.com

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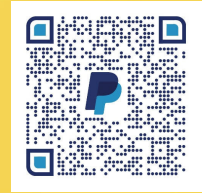
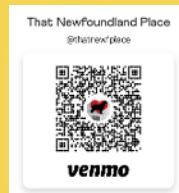
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Thank you for all the generous support.

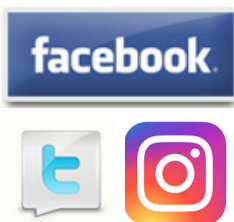
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<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/banking/round-up/frequently-asked-questions/>

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That Newfoundland Place Inc. is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes. Specifically, this organization has been formed to prevent cruelty to animals. Our mission is to offer quality of life to senior dogs of various breeds, to assist in rescue, rehabilitation, and re-homing of dogs in need, with a focus on Newfoundland dogs, and to provide humane education as related to care and life quality. of animals. Ed Derench, President Newsletter editor and publisher Joanna Dumas: joanna.l.dumas@gmail.com