



CAYMAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Age of Dogs in Human Years

Everyone has heard the myth about 'dog years,' which often is described to mean that a dog ages the equivalent of 7 human years for every year of a dog's life. This would mean that a three-year-old dog's age is equivalent to that of a 21-year-old person and a four-year-old dog's age would be equivalent to that of a 28-year-old person...and so on.

The truth is, the relationship is more complex than that. Dogs of different breed sizes age at different rates and dogs age faster or slower depending on how old they are, as shown in the chart below.

COMPARATIVE AGE IN HUMAN YEARS

Dog's Age	0-20 lbs.	21-50 lbs.	51-90 lbs.	over 90 lbs.
5 years	36	37	40	42
6 years	40	42	45	49
7 years	44	47	50	56
10 years	56	60	66	78
12 years	64	69	77	93
15 years	76	83	93	115
20 years	96	105	120	-

Why Does it Matter?

There are a number of reasons why owners should be aware of this variable aging rate.

Among the most important are: Puppies are going through their fastest growth for their first year or even two years. During that entire time, puppies should be fed a complete and balanced puppy food. It may seem strange to call an 18-month-old, 60-pound large breed dog a 'puppy' - but that's what he is.

Large breed puppies have unique nutritional needs. These needs include the need to manage caloric intake to help a large breed puppy achieve an ideal body condition. Keeping your large breed puppy lean helps keep muscular and skeletal growth rates at an ideal pace.

The rule of thumb is that dogs of breeds that typically weigh 50 pounds or more full grown are large breeds and will be puppies for 2 full years. In terms of selecting food and providing health care, you should treat them as puppies for that time.

Even though large breed dogs take longer to reach full maturity, they also will show signs of growing older sooner than other dogs. Very large dogs can become canine senior citizens as early as 5 years. Owners should treat their dogs accordingly. At Cayman Animal Hospital we offer a special comprehensive wellness plan for seniors to keep you pet as healthy as long as possible!