

## Senior Dog Barking at Night

**Aging sometimes brings about personality changes in dogs.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

Posted: Wed Jul 13 00:00:00 PDT 2005

Q. Our 15-year-old Siberian Husky has been an outdoor dog most of his life. Lately he's been barking and whining at night. He'll go on this way until we bring him inside, and then he goes right to sleep. We can't leave him outside making noise because we want to remain on friendly terms with our neighbors. Having him inside at night is a problem because he's not entirely housebroken and has had several very messy accidents on the carpet. Can you help?

A. At 15, your Husky deserves the comfort of sleeping inside if that what he prefers. As dogs get older, they can show personality and behavior changes similar to those seen in humans. They may not like to be left alone, they may vocalize more and they may have accidents in the house where they never did before.

In addition, many large-breed dogs have some degree of arthritis, and sleeping inside where it is warmer and where there is a dog bed will help.

It might be helpful to go back to some puppy housetraining techniques where you leave newspaper in the area where your dog sleeps, possibly putting plastic sheeting underneath it to protect carpeting. Gradually, you may be able to make this area of newspaper smaller, and move it to an area of flooring by the back door.

As your 15-year old gets older, you may notice even more behavioral changes. There is a diet specially formulated for dogs with CDS (a form of Alzheimer's in dogs) made by Hills (B/D, or brain diet), and there are some medications that can also help (as your vet).

Remember to provide a good orthopedic dog bed both inside and outside for those sore joints, and consider putting him on a prescription nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory and possibly a nutraceutical, such as glucosamine.

If he begins to show any signs of separation anxiety or thunderstorm anxiety (both common in older dogs), he may benefit from some prescription antipsychotic drugs. Ask your veterinarian if you see any signs of progressive anxiety.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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