

As our pets age, and if they are experiencing chronic health conditions or serious illness conditions, they need additional support to live the best lives that they can. By implementing a specialized approach to medical care, called Palliative Medicine, we can focus on comfort and Quality of Life as our most important priority. This way, we can help our pets live well, whether they have a lot more time, or just a short period of time remaining. For many pets too, care in the home is especially helpful because it requires no stressful travel or time away from their family. *At Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics, our most important goal is always to help improve the Quality of Life of our patients.*

**Palliative Medicine** refers to the medical aspects of the larger term **Palliative Care** (also called **Hospice Care**). Palliative Medicine is a philosophy of healthcare where emotional and physical comfort are prioritized, and where health conditions are managed long-term, either while seeking a cure or because there is no cure. For example, every patient undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy will benefit from implementing a Palliative Care program during therapy. Palliative Care can refer to healthcare at any point in a pet's life, and Hospice Care generally describes Palliative Care nearer the End of Life.

*In order to help in understanding the services of Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics, Dr. Cook has defined the following four "Levels of Care" which includes the appointment and communication schedule is needed to continue care as an active patient:*

- **Longevity Support** is for pets who are relatively healthy, are usually older (senior or geriatric), and for whom we want to monitor health more carefully. They may have mild or minor chronic health conditions, but no serious or life-limiting illnesses. For these patients, we have the ability to use a variety of supportive therapies, as well as advanced physical examination skills and diagnostic testing to monitor their health. *These pets generally will need to have appointments every 3-6 months.*
- **Palliative Care** is for pets who may or may not be older, but who are experiencing chronic health conditions and/or the early stages of a serious illness. For these pets, there are generally a number of symptoms or issues that are starting to compromise their good Quality of Life, such as pain, nausea, anxiety, etc. Some common examples of conditions where Palliative Care can be beneficial are management of arthritic/spinal pain, mobility issues, degenerative neurological conditions, respiratory conditions, support of early systemic organ failure (e.g. heart, liver, kidney), immune mediated conditions, Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS,

dementia), and support in early stages of cancer (including while undergoing chemotherapy/radiation).

*These pets generally will need to have appointments every 1-3 months.*

- **Hospice Care (Early Hospice Care & Advanced Hospice Care)** is for pets who again may or may not be older, but who are experiencing health conditions that have become unstable and are often in later stages of a serious illness. Unfortunately, sometimes serious illness is either very acute or progresses rapidly, so some pets will need to begin their Palliative Medicine journey in Hospice Care. All of the conditions listed above are also common in Hospice Care patients, but just in later stages. In veterinary medicine, End of Life Care is the final stage of Hospice Care and may or may not involve euthanasia services. *These pets generally will need to have appointments daily to every 4 weeks.*
- What happens during an Initial Consultation Appointment?
  - We will work together to develop a personalized plan for your pet's care. We will consider findings from our physical exam and assessment, review of previous medical history, and discussion of your goals, hopes, and worries for your pet's care moving forward.
  - Initial Consultations are generally about 1.5-2 hours long so that we can fully cover your pet's history, current concerns, and to start to work through an initial recommended care plan. Extended appointments may be available if desired but do carry additional fees. *Please schedule at a time when you have at least two hours available.*
  - Some examples of comfort measures might include improved/multimodal pain management, mobility enhancement techniques and devices, alternate medication and treatment choices, nutrition & hydration therapy, anti-nausea therapy, respiratory/breathing therapies, and anti-anxiety/calming therapies.
  - Dr. Cook is also trained and experienced in TCVM (Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine) with study at the Chi Institute of TCVM and so able to offer services for acupuncture, Chinese herbal therapy, and Chinese food therapy. *A complimentary trial acupuncture treatment is included in the Initial Consultation appointment, time permitting.*
  - Another important part of the Initial Consultation is to start developing a plan for urgent/emergency care if needed, and potentially to discuss considerations for End of Life Care (which may or may not include in-home euthanasia).
- How does On-Going Care work?
  - As part of the Initial Consultation, Dr. Cook will advise what Level of Care (appointment and

communication schedule) is recommended for your pet to help monitor and support their care at each appointment. *The Level of Care will be recommended on the individual care needs of your pet.*

- All new patients will need a follow-up On-Going Care Consultation within 1-14 days of the Initial Consultation to remain an active patient. *Timing of the follow-up after Initial Consultation will be based of the individual care needs of your pet.*
- On-Going Care Consultations are generally ~45-60 minutes long. These appointments are standard follow-up appointments for exam, consultation and medication adjustments.
- Brief Consultations are generally ~20-30 minutes long. These appointments are for minor check-ups, diagnostic specimen collection, and other brief care needs.
- Treatment/Services Visits are generally ~15-20 minutes long. These appointments are used for physical medicine such as acupuncture and laser therapy.
- In some cases, extended appointments may be needed (additional charges apply).
- Availability for Appointments & Communications:
  - Our availability is based on the appointments/commitments already scheduled, but we do our very best to be available when needed.
  - Initial Consultation Consultations are generally scheduled on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, at ~10:00/11:00 AM and ~12:00—1:00 PM.
  - On-Going Care and Brief Consultations and Treatment/Services Visits are scheduled on weekdays with the first appointment at ~10:00/11:00 AM and last appointment of the day at ~3:00/4:00 PM.
- Urgent, Emergency, and After-Hours Appointments:
  - During clinic hours, if we do not have availability for an appointment, we will try to work with you to find a time to fit in an appointment on an emergency basis (additional charges apply).
  - Evening and weekend appointments are provided when possible (additional charges apply).
  - After-Hours Emergency appointments are generally reserved for current/active patients receiving palliative/hospice care but may be available for new patients if possible (additional charges apply).
- Preparing for your pet's Initial Consultation Appointment:
  - The first step is to complete the attached New Patient Form and Questionnaire. This form has been designed carefully by Dr. Cook over a number of years to help in planning for your pet's appointment and care. *Please also save a copy of this form for yourself and as a back-up.*

- **Please complete and return this form to us as soon as possible after requesting an appointment, especially if your pet's care needs are urgent.**
- If you have Microsoft Word, you can complete the form digitally by typing in the grey box fields and using the grey checkboxes. *If you do not have Microsoft Word, please print the PDF version of the form, complete it, and then either email or fax back to us.*
- Dr. Cook will need to review at least 1-2 years of your pet's medical records (more if pertinent to your pet's current health conditions):
  - Please list **ALL** hospitals that have cared for your pet on the New Patient Form (including your primary care veterinarian, specialists, and emergency hospitals).
  - Please contact all of the hospitals/clinics listed on your pet's New Patient Form to request medical records. It will help to request records exactly as following **"Please send the full medical record including physical exam notes, diagnostic testing results, and radiograph images"**.
  - Medical records must be emailed or faxed directly to Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics from additional care providers, not forwarded from previous emails or printouts.
  - *If medical records are not received at least 3-5 days prior to our appointment, there may be inadequate time for review. There are additional charges for review of records received after the Initial Consultation.*
- General Considerations and FAQ's:
  - All appointments are mobile, meaning we come to your home. *We do not have a clinic location.*
  - **All policies regarding COVID-19 safety (see last page of this document) must be followed at all times.**
  - *Dr. Cook must be able to park in close proximity to your home as he is often carrying a number of bags and materials. It is your responsibility to ensure that parking is available and to pay all parking and toll fees.*
  - In most cases, we do not bring a nurse to appointments, but his service can be scheduled in advance if needed, such as to assist in diagnostic specimen collection (additional fees apply).
  - Communications between appointments are generally complimentary as long as recommended appointment schedule is followed, and communications are not overly complex or emergent. There are additional charges for emergency and after-hours communications.
  - Payment is respectfully required at the time of service. *Preferred payment methods are cash, Venmo (@ChicagoVeterinaryGeriatrics), Zelle/Quickpay (info@chicagoveterinarygeriatrics.com), personal check. We are also able to accept major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover).*

## ❖ In-Person Appointments

- ◆ Initial Consultation (non-emergency): 495 + travel fee (appt. duration 1.5-2 hours)
- ◆ On-Going Care Consultations: 185 + travel fee (appt. duration 45-60 minutes)
- ◆ Brief Consultations: 145 + travel fee (appt. duration 20-30 minutes)
- ◆ Treatment/Service Visits: 85 + travel fee (appt. duration 15-20 minutes)
- ◆ Travel Fee: starts at 25 and is based on the distance of your location from our office location. In general, the first 4 miles is included in the base travel fee of 25, and for distances of 4.1--8 miles the travel fee is 50. For distances greater than 8 miles, we can discuss an estimate for your travel fee.
- ◆ Parking & Tolls: you are responsible for all parking, tolls, and parking permit fees
- ◆ Extended Appointment Fee: 75 per additional 15-30 minutes
- ◆ Pre-Planned Evening/Weekend Appointment Fee: 75—150+

## ❖ TeleMedicine Appointments (available only for current/active patients)

- ◆ On-Going Care Phone Consultation: 145 (appt. duration 30-45 minutes)
- ◆ Brief Phone Consultation: 95 (appt. duration 15-20 minutes)

## ❖ Emergency Fees (these fees do not include in-person appointment charges or medication charges)

- ◆ Emergency Phone Consultation (during office hours): 95—145+
- ◆ Emergency Prescription Call-In/Pick-Up Fee (during office hours): 25+
- ◆ Emergency/Fit-In Appointment Fee (during office hours): 75—300+
- ◆ After-Hours Emergency Phone Consultation: 145+
- ◆ After-Hours Emergency Prescription Call-In/Pick-Up Fee: 55+
- ◆ After-Hours/Weekend Emergency Appointment Fee: 150—300+

## ❖ Treatments & Therapies (these do not include in-person appointment charges)

- ◆ Acupuncture Treatment: 85
- ◆ Electroacupuncture Add-On: 25
- ◆ Laser Therapy Treatment: 55—65
- ◆ Laser Therapy Add-On to Acupuncture: 45—55
- ◆ Sanitary Trim and Medical Grooming: 45+
- ◆ Nail Trim: 15—35+

## ❖ Nursing Care Appointments

- ◆ Nurse Consultation (includes nurse exam): 95 + travel fee (appt. duration 30-45 minutes)
- ◆ Nurse Treatment/Service Visit: 55 + travel fee (appt. duration 15-30 minutes)
- ◆ *Services performed during nursing care appointments carry additional fees.*

*Payment is respectfully required at time of service by cash, Venmo (@ChicagoVeterinaryGeriatrics), Zelle/Quickpay (info@chicagoveterinarygeriatrics.com), personal check, or credit card (Visa, MC, Discover, AMEX). Prices included in this document are an estimate, and adjustments may be needed based on specific circumstances that might not be known prior to an appointment. Prices are subject to change at any time. Please contact us if you would like a more detailed estimate for your pet. (Effective Date: January 1, 2021)*

## ❖ COVID-19 (SARS-COV-2) Policy & Information

- Our goal is to continue to provide the most compassionate and gentle in-home care for older pets and pets with serious illness.
- We have updated our policy in April 2020, November 2020, and now in May 2021 based on AVMA & CDC guidance.
- **Failure to comply with any part of this COVID-19 Policy may result in immediate termination of services.**

## ❖ COVID-19 PPE & BIOHAZARD APPOINTMENT FEES:

1. **Homes of NEW patients regardless of vaccination status:**
  - COVID-19 Protocols and Policy will remain basically unchanged (see below) although temperature checks are no longer required.
  - COVID-19 PPE & Biohazard Fee will remain 24.95 until further notice.
2. **Homes of CURRENT patients where all family members (and everyone who will be present at appointments) have completed their vaccine program at least 2 weeks prior to the appointment, and have provided a copy of their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card:**
  - It is now an option for both you and Dr. Cook and CVG staff to wear a single face covering during appointments.
  - COVID-19 PPE & Biohazard Fee will remain 24.95 through May 31, 2021 and will be discontinued starting June 1, 2021.
  - *If you would like Dr. Cook and CVG staff to continue wearing N95 masks in addition to a surgical mask (+/- additional PPE), the COVID-19 PPE & Biohazard Fee will remain 24.95 until further notice.*
3. **Homes of CURRENT patients where some or all family members (including children, and everyone who will be present) have been partially vaccinated, have not been vaccinated, or have NOT provided a copy of the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card:**
  - COVID-19 Protocols and Policy will remain basically unchanged (see below) although temperature checks are no longer required.
  - COVID-19 PPE & Biohazard Fee will remain 24.95 until further notice.

## ❖ PRECAUTIONARY QUESTIONS BEFORE EVERY APPOINTMENT—Has anyone in the household:

1. ...traveled outside of the State of Illinois within the last 14 days (AND/OR had any contact with a person who has)?
  2. ...been placed under self-quarantine or awaiting test results due to potential COVID-19 exposure?
  3. ...had any contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or with symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
  4. ...been experiencing any illness or COVID-19 symptoms including but not limited to fever, body aches, dry cough, fatigue, chills, headache, sore throat, loss of appetite, and/or loss of sense of smell/taste)?
- **If anyone in your household answers “YES” to any of these questions, please notify us immediately.**
  - We will notify you immediately if Dr. Cook or CVG staff would answer yes to these questions.
  - ***Please confirm your answers over email the day before our appointment.***

## ❖ WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PROTECT YOU AND OUR STAFF?

1. Vaccination: Dr. Cook is fully vaccinated as of April 30, 2021. All CVG staff who attend appointments will also be fully vaccinated.
2. Monitoring: Dr. Cook and CVG staff keep a daily body temperature and symptom log.
3. Testing: Dr. Cook and CVG staff have access to rapid COVID-19 testing if needed.
4. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) & Hygiene:
  - Ongoing frequent hand washing/hand sanitization and disinfection of all materials/supply bags between appointments.
  - Dr. Cook and CVG staff will wear an N95 mask and surgical mask cover at each appointment (+ additional PPE if indicated).
  - ***All humans present at the appointment are required to wear your own face covering as well as an additional (provided) surgical mask at all times during every appointment. Two masks are provided per appointment at no charge.***
5. Social Distancing: We will practice social distancing as much as possible. Appointments can be outdoors or via Zoom when acceptable.
  - **While indoors with Dr. Cook and/or CVG Staff, you may not remove or lower your mask, even for a moment.**

*Thank you for helping us continue to provide in-home care by keeping everyone safe.*