



SPECIAL PETS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS A BOOK FOR FAMILIES



OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY

SPECIAL NEEDS

WHO ARE ANIMALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

Like people, any animal can have problems or a “disability,” such as not being able to see, hear, or move without help. Animals in the wild that are born with disabilities have trouble getting enough food and are often unable to protect themselves. For many years, animals like cats and dogs who were born with problems were not allowed to be pets or sometimes were not even allowed to live. Now, though, many people realize that pets are part of their family and will do everything they can to help their pet with a disability. Some people even adopt pets with special needs from a rescue or shelter. These adopters understand that their special pet will need special care for their entire life.



PETS WHO NEED HELP TO WALK

- The animal lost an arm (foreleg) or leg (hindleg) from an accident or had to have the leg removed because of a disease.
- The animal was born without a foreleg or hindleg or all the parts.
- The animal has a condition or disease that makes moving difficult, such as arthritis or missing bones, joints, or nerves.



HOW TO HELP PETS GET WHERE THEY WANT TO GO!

- Train them to use artificial forelegs or hindlegs called prostheses.
- Help them use wheeled carts
- Purchase special car seats and use harnesses in cars or transporting in crates
- Learn how to pick up an animal safely
- Add equipment in the pet’s home like ramps, elevated feeding and water stations, special places for going the bathroom



PETS WHO CANNOT HEAR

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR PET CANNOT HEAR?

- Deaf animals may use their vision or feel vibration to tell them what is going on around them. Once they are aware, they respond the same way as a hearing animal.
- Deaf dogs may react to visual cues and not audio, such as moving shadows, animals or people, lights, and flashlights.

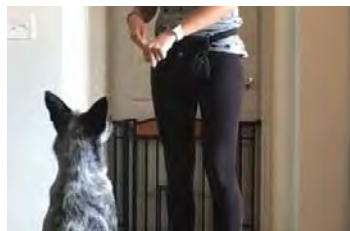
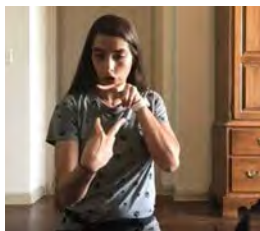


PETS WHO HAVE PROBLEMS HEARING

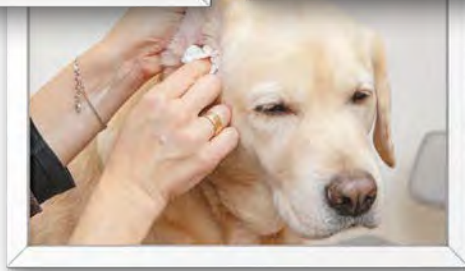
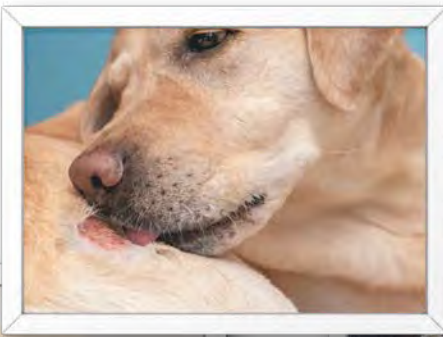
- Dogs born deaf, may have white or merle coats.
- Cats born deaf may have white coats and blue eyes.
- Animals may have gradual hearing loss from aging changes.
- Animals may lose hearing after many severe or frequent ear infections.
- Animals who have had head injuries may have lost hearing.
- Animals exposed to frequent or constant loud noise may lose hearing.

HOW TO HELP YOUR DEAF PETS!

- Make sure they can see you by providing hand signals, using animated facial expressions and body language.
- Train them to recognize hand signs like modified American Sign Language or develop your own consistent signals.
- Praise them and tell them they are recognizing the cues correctly, give positive reinforcement like a thumbs-up gesture or a light flash, similar to clicker training.
- Teach your pet to react calmly to sudden touch by gently touching to wake up or approach when the pet isn't looking.
- Use gestures like waving your hand, stomp on the floor for the vibration, throw a soft or foam toy or try a flashlight or laser pointer (never shine into their face or eyes) to get their attention.
- Encourage your pet to look at you for cues. Deaf animals rely on eyes, nose, touch, and vibration to "hear".
- Make sure your dog or cat has an Identification tag with their name, stating they are deaf and had your name and phone number around its collar.
- Microchip your pet and register with a well known registry.
- Put a bell on your dog's collar that you can hear your dog's location.
- Your pet may realize you are calling them with a vibrating collar
- Use a flashlight in the dark or if you go out at night, even if on a harness or leash.
- Turn the porch light off and on outside at night to show which house is yours.



PETS WHO HAVE PROBLEMS FROM ALLERGIES



HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR PET HAS ALLERGIES?

Pets, like humans, can suffer from allergies. Common allergens include fleas, food ingredients (like beef, chicken, or dairy), and environmental factors such as pollen, mold, and dust mites. Symptoms in pets can include itchy skin, excessive scratching or licking, skin infections, ear infections, and even respiratory issues.

POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGIES

- Skin: Itchiness, redness, inflammation, scabs, hair loss, and excessive scratching or licking.
- Ears: Frequent ear infections, redness, wax build-up, and head shaking.
- Respiratory: Coughing, sneezing, and difficulty breathing (more common in cats).
- Other: Excessive licking of paws, anal gland issues, and gastrointestinal problems.

TYPES OF PET ALLERGIES

- Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD): Caused by a reaction to flea saliva, resulting in intense itching and skin irritation.
- Food allergies: Can develop to various protein and carbohydrate sources, most commonly animal proteins.
- Environmental allergies (Atopy): Reactions to airborne allergens like pollen, mold, and dust mites.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Flea control and flea baths
- Reduce exposure to pollens, molds, and dust
- Identifying food sensitivities
- Discuss treatment with your veterinarian
- Over the counter medications such as antihistamines, nasal sprays, and decongestants



PETS WHO CANNOT SEE WELL

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR PET CANNOT SEE OR SEE WELL?

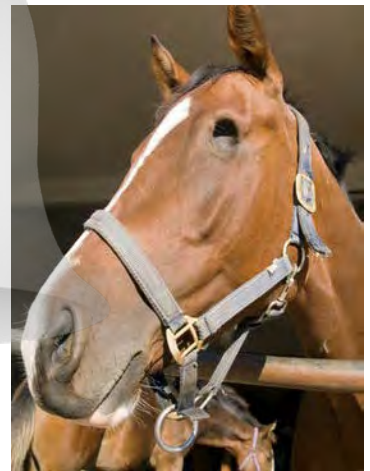
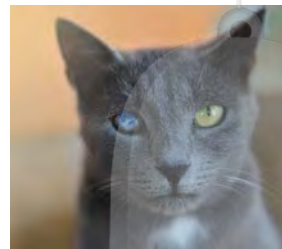
- Animals may use their hearing or feel vibration to tell them what is going on around them. Once they are aware, they may respond the same way as a sighted animal, but may need guidance.
- Blind animals may react to auditory cues rather than visual, such as clickers, voice, clapping, or gentle touch.
- Low vision or blind pets will need adaptations to maneuver around their home.

PETS WHO HAVE PROBLEMS SEEING

- May have cloudy, very small, or closed eyes.
- Animals may have gradual vision loss from aging changes.
- Blind pets may bump into furniture, other objects, or may have difficulty finding their food and water bowls or litter box
- May have eye lens problems like cataracts or an illness like diabetes, glaucoma, retinal degeneration, high blood pressure or infections. use retinal detachment.

WAYS TO HELP YOUR PETS WHO CANNOT SEE WELL

- Blind pets can learn to move safely in their home when furniture and food and water bowls are kept in the same locations.
- A consistent routine will help the pet be oriented to day and night.
- Use scents and sound cues to help attract them and help them know where they are in your home or outside on a leash or harness.
- Safety-proof stairs or swimming pools.
- Encourage independence by using sound-making toys, bells, or verbal cues to help your pet find you or others.



PETS WITH BREATHING PROBLEMS



MAY BE MORE COMMON IN SOME BREEDS OF CATS AND DOGS

DOGS

Some dog and cat breeds can have flat faces with short snouts. Examples in dogs are pugs, bulldogs, Boston terriers, Shih Tzus, Pekingese, boxers, bullmastiffs, Lhasa Apsos, chow chows, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Brussels Griffons, Japanese Chins, Affenpinschers, and Dogues de Bordeaux..



CATS

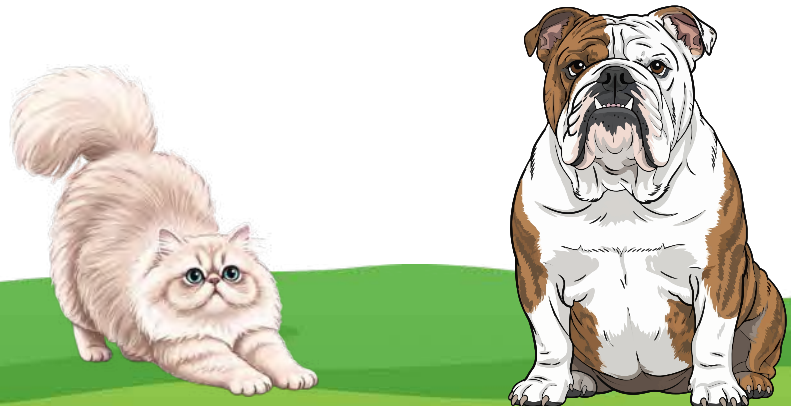
Cat breeds may include Persians, Himalayans, exotic shorthairs, British shorthairs, and Scottish Folds.

SYMPTOMS

- Noisy breathing and wheezing
- Snoring
- Restless sleeping
- Labored breathing with exercise intolerance, especially in the heat or when excited
- Gagging or retching with/without swallowing
- Reduced oxygen with a blue tongue or gums

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Help your pet avoid overexercising and being in the heat too long.
- Your pet should keep their weight within a preferred range as overweight will stress breathing and joints.



PETS WHO ARE SICK OR WHO ARE BORN WITH BRAIN PROBLEMS

EXAMPLE OF A METABOLIC DISEASE: DIABETES

A cat or dog may develop diabetes at a very young age, but generally the disease is diagnosed in older pets with these symptoms that may be seen suddenly or gradually. While your pet may not have diabetes, if you see any of these symptoms, it's a good idea to have your pet examined.



- Weight loss
- Depression
- Changes in appetite
- Cloudy eyes
- Poor vision
- Vomiting
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Chronic or recurring infections
- Skin infections that take an abnormally long time to heal
- Changes in your pet's coat
- Low energy
- Decreased mobility

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- The veterinarian will want to run blood and urine tests to check for high blood sugar levels or sugar in your pet's urine. There are different types of diabetes, so treatment depends on which type your pet has.
- Sometimes diet and exercise changes can keep sugar levels under control, but other types of diabetes may require your pet to receive insulin injections or oral medication also. The pet with diabetes will need to be frequently monitored by the veterinarian to make sure that the medication is keeping blood sugar at the right levels.

EXAMPLE OF A NEUROLOGIC CONDITION CEREBELLAR HYPOPLASIA

A cat or dog born with cerebellar hypoplasia may have mild to severe balance problems and show these symptoms:

- Difficulty with mobility and balance
- Head bobbing
- Falling down while trying to walk, get up, eat, or go to the bathroom
- Difficulty keeping still enough to get food or water out of a bowl
- Unable to safely climb stairs or jump

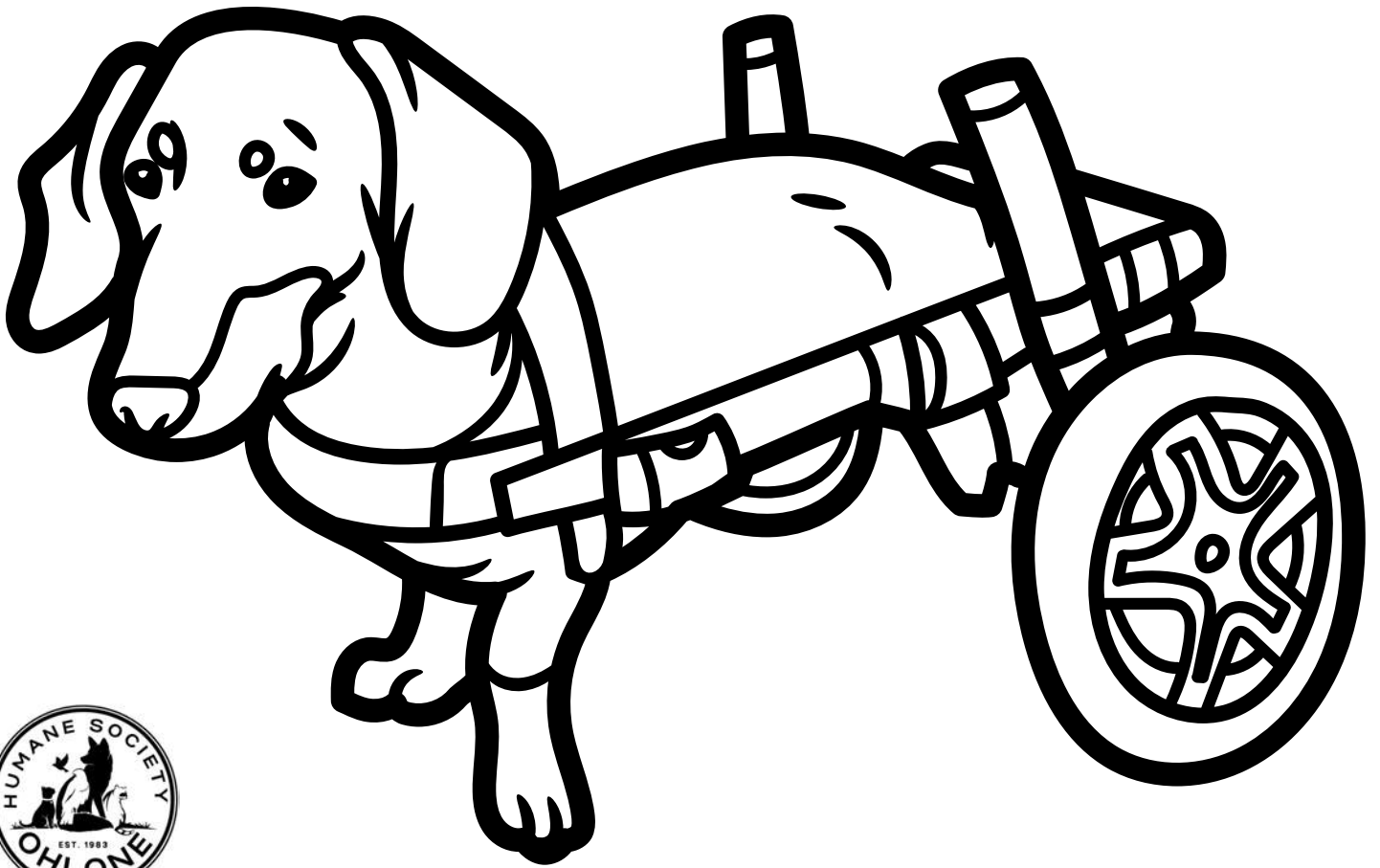


WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- If your pet has a permanent neurologic condition, you will learn how to modify your home and your pet's living area to make the best of their abilities.
- Items like weighted food and water bowls, nonskid surfaces, keeping paths clear of sharp objects, high or low sided litter boxes, depending on the cat, and sometimes other weighted items like harnesses can help your pet stabilize better at times.



COLOR THE DOG WITH A WHEELED CART



LEARN ABOUT ANIMALS WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS!

EDUCATE OTHERS!

SPAY/NEUTER, VACCINATE
& MICROCHIP YOUR PET

