

Purina Veterinarian Explains Why Senior Dog Nutrition Needs to Start Earlier Than Owners Expect

Dr. RuthAnn Lobos, who trains for marathons alongside her own dogs, on why a dog's drive can mask the early signs of aging

ST. LOUIS, Aug. 19, 2026 [PRNewswire/](#) -- Dr. RuthAnn Lobos spends her early mornings and weekends logging miles outside with her own dogs. It's there that she sees a recurring blind spot among owners of active dogs. Nutritional needs shift around age 7, often before any outward sign appears. Purina Pro Plan [AdvantEDGE Senior Support+](#) is built to support that shift before it's visible.

"An eager dog will keep going long after its body is telling him to slow down," Lobos says. "Drive alone doesn't mean your dog is fine. That's the piece I want owners to catch earlier."

AT A GLANCE

- Nutritional needs for dogs begin to shift around age 7 — often before owners notice any outward change.
- Active, sporting and working dogs can mask early signs of aging. Their enthusiasm doesn't slow down even when their bodies are changing.
- Pro Plan AdvantEDGE Senior Support+ is a science-backed formula built around three areas: cognitive sharpness, immune health and joint health and mobility.
- The formula is backed by more than a decade of peer-reviewed research.
- Real chicken is the first ingredient.
- Available in Adult, Small Breed, and Large Breed formulas.

The moment most owners miss

Lobos points to age 7 as the inflection point most owners don't expect. "People picture a senior dog as one that's visibly slowing down — stiff getting up, sleeping more," she says. "But for a lot of active dogs, especially the working ones, the slowdown shows up late. It lags behind the real physiological shift. By the time you see it, the dog's already been dealing with it for a while."

That gap matters most for dogs whose owners treat energy as a proxy for health. Think of a working retriever still eager for the field. Or a running partner still pulling at the leash. "The dogs I worry about most are the ones that never act like anything's wrong," Lobos says. "Those are the ones I want on a proactive plan, not a reactive one."

What a proactive plan looks like

Three areas of nutrition support a dog through this transition, according to Lobos. All three are featured in Pro Plan AdvantEDGE Senior Support+:

- **Cognition.** The formula's Bright Mind technology is shown to promote alertness and mental sharpness in senior dogs. That matters for working and sporting dogs, which depend on focus as much as physical stamina.
- **Immune health.** A specialized blend clinically proven to increase immune response in dogs age 7 and older.
- **Mobility.** Joint-support nutrients, including glucosamine and EPA (an omega-3 fatty acid), support joint health and mobility

The formula is backed by more than a decade of research. Real chicken is the first ingredient. It's available in adult, small breed and large breed varieties. Breed size affects the pace and timing of a dog's aging

process, Lobos notes, which makes that distinction matter.

"I don't think of this as 'senior food' in the way people picture it," Lobos says. "I think of it as staying ahead of a transition. It's already started, whether or not the dog is showing it yet."

Common questions about aging in dogs

- *At what age should dog owners start thinking about senior nutrition?* Around age 7, nutritional needs begin to shift. This often happens before visible signs of aging appear, especially in active, sporting and working dogs.
- *Can an energetic dog still be aging internally?* Yes. High drive and enthusiasm can mask the physiological changes associated with aging. That's why proactive nutrition support is recommended starting around age 7, rather than waiting for visible symptoms.
- *What does Pro Plan AdvantEDGE Senior Support+ target?* Three areas: cognitive support (via Bright Mind technology), immune support, and joint health and mobility (via glucosamine and EPA).

For more information, visit www.purina.com/pro-plan/dogs/advantedge-dog-food. Follow Dr. Lobos on Instagram [@petvetruthann](https://www.instagram.com/petvetruthann).

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or [subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

About Purina Pro Plan

Purina Pro Plan is a leader in the advanced nutrition category, with more than 140 targeted formulas to help your pet thrive throughout every stage of life. For more information, visit www.proplan.com or follow @ProPlan on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

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