



BECOMING A CANCER DETECTIVE

EARLY DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS IS CRITICAL



Since beginning her holistically oriented veterinary practice over 30 years ago, Deva Khalsa VMD has been incorporating homeopathy, acupuncture, Chinese herbs, nutritional advice, and allergy elimination techniques such as Allergy Elimination and JMT into her approach. Today her work is a blend of sophisticated holistic techniques and traditional veterinary medicine designed to best enhance the natural strengths and attributes of her patient. She is available for worldwide consults by contacting her online at doctordeva.com

For loving dog owners, cancer is the most feared disease. It's a sad fact that cancer is the primary cause of death in dogs older than two years in the United States; one in three – with some statistics saying one in two – dogs will get cancer. That's truly significant.

THE SILENT KILLER

Cancer has been called “the silent killer.” Because our pets can't express discomfort in a body area or unusual tiredness, cancer in dogs usually isn't detected early on. Unless the mass is bulging out noticeably from the skin, most cancer grows invisibly, inside the body. Many of the symptoms and signs that tell the owner and the veterinarian that something is very wrong are discovered only after the cancer is well established. The later the cancer is found, the more time the cancer cells have had to spread.

Unexplained weight loss may be a sign of cancer. If your dog is losing weight and increasing the amount of food does not result in weight gain you should have your veterinarian do a full exam. Cancer cells use a lot of energy as they divide five times more rapidly than normal cells. It takes a lot of energy to make those new cells. Cancer cells also hijack the body's natural fuel sources and literally rob normal tissue of its fuel. Weight loss can also be a sign of other diseases, especially when it's accompanied by increased drinking.

IS YOUR YARD DANGEROUS?

Among the many factors that can increase dogs' cancer risk, studies have shown that lawn chemicals increase the risk of both bladder cancer and lymphosarcoma in dogs. When it rains, the lawn products we buy and religiously apply to the grass actually rise up into a fine mist sitting a few feet over the lawn. Our dogs (and our children!) run through this mist and the chemicals soak in through their feet; they're also inhaled into their lungs and absorbed by their mucous membranes. Every day they run around at home and in parks and pick up these carcinogens.

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AMONG THE MANY FACTORS THAT CAN INCREASE DOGS' CANCER RISK, STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT LAWN CHEMICALS INCREASE THE RISK OF BOTH BLADDER CANCER AND LYMPHOSARCOMA IN DOGS.

THYROID AND VITAMIN D3 FOR PREVENTION

A properly functioning thyroid and adequate blood levels of D3 are very important in preventing cancer.

The thyroid, as the “master gland,” regulates just about every bodily function. Ask your veterinarian for a full thyroid panel, or get them to draw blood and you can send the sample yourself to Hemopet, completing the online submission form at hemopet.org.

Every year, more and more research on vitamin D3 shows how vital it is for immune health. It's been found that the risk of getting cancer quadruples in dogs with low stores of vitamin D. Vitamins that come from food are always better than synthetic supplements, so adding fish (especially wild salmon) or fish liver to your dog's diet is an excellent and safe way of giving him more vitamin D. Vitamin D3 levels can be tested at the Veterinary Diagnostics Institute.

TESTING FOR CANCER

While “tumor marker testing” for prostate and breast cancer, along with some other cancers, has been available to humans for years, these tests have not been made available for our pets. Additionally, it's common for routine blood tests to show normal results even when cancer is present. I've had many clients ecstatically tell me that their dog with terminal cancer had a normal blood test. It may seem unimaginable that a pet who is so very sick will have a relatively normal blood panel, but it's usually the case.

The good news is that tests are now becoming available to help diagnose cancer in dogs and also to help monitor cancer therapy. Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories has two such tests. The TK cancer panel requires evidence of potential cancer before running the test. When a suspicious mass is identified, or the dog presents with other indicators common with cancer, the cancer panel is used to detect the presence of neoplastic disease. Another test, called the INCaSe canine, can actually be used in routine screening for general health and cancer in the apparently healthy dog. High risk groups would involve seniors and breeds predisposed to cancer, such as the Golden Retriever. These tests can also be used to follow the progress made as the cancer is treated.

Bladder cancer is usually diagnosed with an ultrasound, after a patient who appears to have a urinary tract infection does not respond to treatment. That said, a mass in the bladder might be questionable. That's why it's good to know that there is a new test called the CADET BRAF Assay that's available for early detection of and monitoring of canine transitional cell carcinoma and urothelial carcinoma. All you have to do is send a urine sample directly to the company at the cost of \$159.00. The same company has a CADET (SM) HM Assay for distinction between canine histiocytic malignancy and other round cell neoplasms.

Lymphosarcoma is diagnosed by a fine needle aspirate.

I treat far too many cases of cancer in dogs and more information from reliable tests makes my job easier. It also works out to be less traumatic for the patient. Lastly, because most cancers are inside the body and not visible, tests that follow up on effectiveness of the procedure I'm using on a particular patient with a particular kind of cancer gives welcome guidance. It's nice to know that more and more reliable tests are becoming available for our very best friends. 🌱

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	Actual	Reference
Protein (g/dl)	156	105
Albumin (g/dl)	84	39
Urea Nitrogen (mg/dl)	21	29
Creatinine (mg/dl)	1	0.6
Calcium (mg/dl)	203	200



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