

Key Resources

Find a Specialist

Cancer is a complicated disease, and depending on the type of cancer your dog has, you may want to consider working with specialists, in addition to your regular veterinarian to help your dog fight cancer. If you have a Veterinary School in your state, this is also a great resource for finding veterinary specialists and state-of-the-art care.



Locate a Veterinary Oncologist or Specialist

www.ACVIM.org

Locate a Holistic Veterinarian

www.holisticvetlist.org

Find Support

A cancer diagnosis frequently provokes anxiety, anger and anticipatory grief. Talking with and learning from others who have dealt with canine cancer can be very helpful.

Georgia's Legacy on Facebook —

Connect with others who have experienced cancer and get the latest news on how to help your dog fight the good fight.

Pet Cancer Support Group —

<http://forums.delphiforums.com/petcancer>

Free, online support forum for pet owners dealing with cancer.

Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement —

www.aplb.org

Services include chat rooms moderated by trained pet loss counselors, to help those experiencing anticipatory grief or who have recently lost a pet.



Georgia's Legacy was founded in 2007 and is an ongoing tribute to the life of a beautiful bulldog named Georgia, cut short by multicentric lymphoma at just five years old.

The mission of Georgia's Legacy is to improve awareness of canine cancer among pet owners and to provide information and resource referral to others whose four-legged family members have been diagnosed with cancer. Most of all, Georgia's Legacy was created to provide hope and emotional support to those in the fight.



Questions?

Visit us online at

www.FightCanineCancer.com

Or send us an email at

georgiaslegacy@fightcaninecancer.com

CANCER: First Steps for Pet Owners



www.FightCanineCancer.com



It's Cancer...Now What?

Help your dog — and yourself — by becoming educated about cancer. Learn as much as you can about the type and stage of your dog's cancer and what resources are available to help you put together a comprehensive plan of care. It's your job to be the best advocate possible for your dog, so don't be afraid to ask questions, and always trust your instincts when it comes to making decisions.

Options. There are many cancer treatment options available for pets today, and many types of cancers can be put into remission or even cured. Most treatment plans involve some combination of chemotherapy, surgery or radiation, but new treatments are being developed all the time. In some cases, families may choose natural or alternative therapies or even hospice care, instead of aggressive treatment. Talk with your veterinary professional and then listen to your heart — only you know which choice is best for your dog.

Put together a strong team. Consulting with an oncologist, holistic veterinarian or other specialist can help round out your dog's treatment plan and provide a range of options to ensure that your dog can live well with cancer. It's important to work with professionals who respect your opinions and who you trust to guide you on this journey. Friends, family or support groups can also help you cope with the stress and demands of dealing with cancer and play an important role on your team.

Enjoy each day. If you are stressed and anxious, your dog will pick up on that and it can make them stressed too, which can negatively affect their health and wellbeing. Try to live in the moment as our dogs do, and focus on taking one step at a time. The journey with cancer has many ups and downs, but you are not alone. Help and hope are available every step of the way.

The Truth about Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a commonly used path to remission or cure, but many people are concerned that it will make their dog's life unbearable and are resistant to using it. However, dogs tolerate chemotherapy much better than humans because lower doses are used to minimize unwanted side effects. As a result, most dogs experience a high quality of life throughout treatment and pet owners are often surprised at how 'normal' their dogs act while going through chemo. Most side effects that do occur are mild, and can often be prevented or managed by using a holistic approach that may include nutritional supplements, dietary changes or even complimentary therapies such as acupuncture or Reiki.

Diet & Cancer

Research shows that dogs given a diet low in carbohydrates and sugars and high in Omega-3 fatty acids (i.e. fish oil) and protein have longer survival times post diagnosis. Special "cancer diets" are available commercially or can be homemade. Hill's n/d is a popular canned food available through veterinarians, and is the only food *clinically* proven to improve survival times for dogs with cancer. However, there are also many other high-quality grain free commercial diets that may be appropriate for cancer patients as well.



Diet and nutrition should play a large role in your dog's cancer treatment plan.

Holistic Therapies

Many people choose to use Complimentary or Alternative Therapies to help their dogs fight cancer. These treatments often focus on building up the immune system and supporting the body so it can better tolerate conventional cancer treatments. While holistic approaches may be used exclusively, best results are usually achieved when a combination of conventional and

complimentary therapies are used to treat cancer. A veterinarian who specializes in holistic care can help you decide which therapies will best help your dog, and can work with your primary vet or oncologist to coordinate care.

Hospice Care

When cancer is very advanced, or conventional treatments cannot offer hope of a long-term cure or remission, palliative or hospice care may be the right option for your dog. Hospice care focuses on pain and symptom management rather than curative treatments and can help your dog maintain good quality of life for as long as possible. Care is often provided in the home to minimize stress, and includes compassionate guidance regarding end-of-life decisions. Hospice care for animals is relatively new to the veterinary field, but many clinics and hospitals now offer some level of hospice care for your pets. Talk with your vet to find out if this service is available in your area.

Financing Cancer Treatments

Cancer care can be very expensive, depending on the nature of your dog's cancer and treatment path you choose. Possible sources for funding assistance include:

- Pet Insurance (if you have an existing plan)
- Care Credit—www.carecredit.com
- Private Foundations & Assistance Programs
- Personal Fundraising (eBay, garage sales, CafePress, friends & family, etc.)

If finances are still a major concern, **don't give up**. Talk with your vet to see if there are alternative treatment options available that may be less expensive but still relatively effective in prolonging your dog's life.

For a detailed list of financial assistance resources, visit www.FightCanineCancer.com/funding.html