

For Immediate Release

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No one is immune to cancer - not even your pets. It is a frightening word to hear and panic can quickly set in.



What does this mean?

How did this happen?

How long do we have?

What can we do?

These are all important questions to ask of your veterinarian when a diagnosis of cancer is given to your beloved dog or cat.

What is cancer?

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth or replication of cells anywhere in the body. These cells may form into masses or tumors. Cancerous tumors are malignant, which means they can spread into, or invade, nearby tissues. In addition, as the tumor grows, cancer cells may break off and travel to other parts of the body through the blood or lymphatic systems. Some tumors are benign which means they are non-invasive and generally non life-threatening. **Close to 50% of dogs over 10 years of age are affected by cancer (slightly lower percentage in cats).**

How did this happen?

"Causes of cancer are numerous and include genetics, spay/neuter status, hormones, environmental contaminants, viruses etc." says veterinarian Dr. Karen Choptain.

What do I do next?

"When your pet has been diagnosed with cancer, depending on the type, your veterinarian will likely advise a procedure called staging. Staging helps to provide details about your pet's cancer. This may involve bloodwork, x-rays, ultrasound or biopsies," adds Dr. Choptain.

Your veterinarian may consult with an oncologist to help determine the best plan of action.

What is the treatment?

Treatment options for cancer varies depending on the type of cancer. Some types may be curative with surgical removal. Other cancers may require chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Dr. Choptain suggests, "cancer treatments in our pets have come a long way. The goal of treatment is to prolong life and improve quality so that our pets are comfortable. Your veterinarian will discuss options with you and together you will make a plan that is best for you and your pet."

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