

# POINTERS ON PETS

## Did You Know? Cancer Is As Common In Pets As In Humans

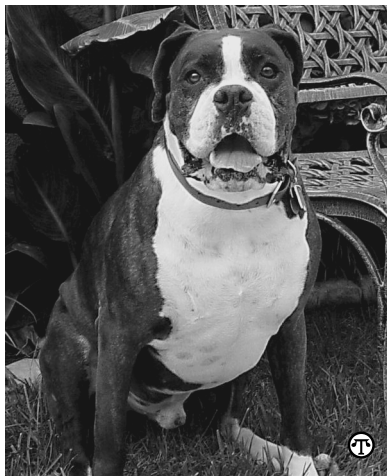
(NAPSA)—Many people don't realize that cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death in pets and that proper veterinary care can help ensure your pets get the treatment they need.

Pets develop the same types of cancers as people. Dogs, for example, are 35 times more likely to develop skin cancer than humans, four times more likely to get breast cancer, eight times more likely to succumb to bone cancer and twice as likely to develop leukemia. Insurance claims show lymphosarcoma and skin cancer as the most common pet cancers.

"Dog and cat owners should take their pets in for annual checkups," Dr. Carol McConnell, of Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) suggests. "Clinical signs of cancer can present themselves in dogs and cats at a very rapid rate."

Cancer causes almost half the deaths of pets more than 10 years old. Here are some signs to watch for:

- A growing lump or a sore that doesn't heal
- Discharge or bleeding
- Your pet is losing weight despite eating normally
- Going more than a day or two without eating
- Difficulty in chewing or swallowing
- Any unusually bad smell coming from your pet
- Tiring easily and unwillingness to exercise.



**Six-year-old boxer Max has been cancer free since 2006, thanks largely in part to veterinary medicine and pet health insurance.**

If you're attuned to your pet's needs and ordinary behavior, you may be able to spot changes that indicate problems. However, in many cases, the signs are difficult to detect. Only a veterinarian can diagnose cancer, so regular preventive examinations are important.

If cancer is diagnosed in your pet, there is hope. Due to rapid advances in veterinary medicine, early detection of cancer in pets can be battled with some success. Sophisticated treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy and surgical procedures that were once only per-

formed on humans are now available for pets, too.

These procedures may become expensive, but cancer treatment costs can be affordable with financial assistance for pets in the form of medical insurance.

Medical plans from VPI, for example, reimburse for the testing and treatment of common cancers. Pet owners can also purchase a special Cancer Rider as an add-on to their base policy. This plan increases the cancer benefits, resulting in a substantial amount in reimbursement after a claim is filed. Early pet insurance enrollment is important, since pre-existing medical conditions are not eligible for coverage.

VPI reports that cancer claims are the fourth-highest type of feline claim and sixth-highest type of canine claim that pet owners submit. To help in the fight against pet cancer, VPI encourages pet owners to contribute to a special cause. Pet owners can display their support by purchasing a limited-edition Pet Cancer Awareness dog collar adorned with lavender ribbons; all profits from sales go directly to the Animal Cancer Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to pet and human cancer research. Visit [www.petinsurance.com/cancer](http://www.petinsurance.com/cancer) to order yours today.

For additional information on protecting your pet with insurance, including cancer protection, call (800) 944-1751.