

## WHAT ARE COMMON WARNING SIGNS OF CANCER IN PETS?

### Lumps and Bumps

The good news is up to 80% of skin lumps in pets are not cancerous, but consulting with your veterinarian is the only way to be sure. If the lump is growing or does not resolve on its own within a few weeks, contact your vet and he or she will perform further testing to determine if the lump is something to be concerned about.

### Abnormal Odors

Foul odors from any of your cat or dog's orifices and/or body parts can be cause of concern. Cancers of the mouth, nose, or anal regions can cause your pet to emit offensive odors without any obvious signs of a tumor.

### Abnormal Discharges

Discharges such as blood, pus, vomit, diarrhea, and any other abnormal substance being excreted from your pet's body should be checked out by a veterinarian immediately. Never assume vomiting and/or diarrhea are just signs of an "upset stomach" unless you have discussed these signs with your veterinarian.

### Non-Healing Wounds

Lacerations or sores on your pet's skin that do not heal within a few days can indicate infection, skin disease, or possibly cancer. Many skin tumors are initially misdiagnosed as infections, so early treatment is important.

### Weight Loss

Sudden weight loss in cats and dogs not on a diet can be an indicator of many diseases and illnesses. If you notice your pet has lost weight, you should contact your vet right away and inform him or her about your pet's symptoms.

### Change in Appetite

While a lack of appetite in dogs and cats can be an indicator of many things, they never stop eating without a cause. Decreases in appetite can indicate an oral tumor, which would make it painful and difficult for your pet to eat and swallow. It could also be a part of general illness related to cancer or a different disease process. Change in appetite along with weight loss are common signs seen in pets with cancer.

### **Coughing or Difficulty Breathing**

Although usually considered signs of heart and lung disease, coughing and/or difficulty breathing can be a warning sign of cancer in pets. For example, many dogs with lymphoma will show coughing or noisy breathing because lymph nodes in their throat region are enlarged. Coughing can also occur if cancer in your pet's body has spread to their lungs.

### **Lethargy and Decreased Energy**

If your pet has cancer, there is a chance that he or she will show signs of decreased exercise tolerance, sleep more, become less playful, and be less willing to go for walks. Although lethargy and/or depression in dogs and cats can set in with any illness, it is commonly seen in pets that have cancer.

### **Changes in Bathroom Habits**

Any changes in your pet's bathroom habits including difficulty eliminating, increased frequency of urination or bowel movements, and blood in the urine or stool are potential warning signs that cancer has developed in your pet.

### **Evidence of Pain**

Limping or other evidence of pain in your dog or cat when he or she is active, or if the pain is too great for them to be active, can be indications of cancer in the bone, muscle, or nervous system, or could indicate spread of cancer. Never treat your pet's pain with human medications, as many are deadly for dogs and cats.