

Study to Prevent Canine Cancer Launched

New study will see if antioxidants can reduce canine cancer risk.

Posted: April 11, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

A nationwide study is being launched to test the theory that daily antioxidant supplements can substantially reduce the incidence of bone cancer in dogs.

This is the first cancer prevention trial in pet dogs, according to the Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation, which is launching the study. Previous emphasis in cancer research, for humans as well as dogs, has focused mainly on treatment, not prevention.

“The intervention we’re testing is a potent antioxidant combination that significantly reduces the sensitivity of cells to oxidative stress,” said Michael Hayek, Ph.D., associate director of research and development, Procter & Gamble Pet Care, the makers of Iams and Eukanuba, which is funding the study.

“In a pilot study, we teamed up with Murphy Foundation scientists to show that daily treatment with these supplements rendered the blood cells of dogs more resistant to oxidative stress challenge in the laboratory,” Hayek said.

Under the trial, 700 healthy, cancer-free Rotweiler dogs currently 5 or 6 years old will be followed for eight years. Rotweillers were chosen because of the breed’s strong predisposition to bone cancer.

The researchers will study bone cancer incidence, as well as overall cancer incidence and whether antioxidants can increase longevity.

“This landmark study will test whether a change in diet that heightens your defenses against oxidative stress translates into reduced cancer risk or increased longevity,” says lead investigator David Waters, DVM, Ph.D., executive director of the Murphy Foundation.

Enrollment of dogs into the trial is expected to be completed over the next 30 months.