

Bone Up on Your Canine Cancer IQ

Pet Cancer Awareness Month aims to educate dog owners about canine cancer detection and treatment.

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Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) reports that cancer is the No. 1 killer of pets. In an effort to educate pet owners on the problems of feline and canine cancers, VPI declared November Pet Cancer Awareness month.

“Successful treatment of pet cancer depends on early detection,” said Dr. Carol McConnell, vice president and chief veterinary medical officer for VPI. “Routine physical exams are essential for every pet ... Clinical signs of cancer include sudden weight loss, non-healing lumps or sores, an increase or decrease in appetite, difficulty chewing or swallowing, unusually strong bodily odors, and/or exercise intolerance.”

Based on its insurance claims, VPI reported that the most common canine cancers in 2006 were lymphosarcoma, which affects the lymph system, skin tumors, and osteogenic sarcoma, also known as bone cancer. Insurance claims from 2005 showed nearly identical data, according to VPI.

During the month of November, Pet Cancer Awareness dog collars will be available for purchase through VPI's website. The collars are lined with lavender ribbons in recognition of pets who have battled cancer. All profits from the collars will help fund cancer research and prevention.