

Cancer Awareness in Dogs

Early identification and treatment can help your dog beat cancer.

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Choosing the Right Natural Therapy Treatment choices include the conventional-and sometimes necessary-methods of chemotherapy, radiation therapy, cryosurgery (freezing), hyperthermia (artificially causing a fever), as well as alternative therapies such as immunotherapy. Immunotherapy (drug therapy that stimulates the immune system) may help stave off cancer. "I have been using Immuno Augmentive Therapy (IAT) in combination with other holistic therapies to treat cancer since the mid-1970s. These therapies all work to balance the immune system, returning it to peak function," says Dr. Goldstein. Like Dr. Goldstein, more and more holistic vets are fighting cancer by using IAT in combination with other conventional treatments and natural methods such as nutrition, vitamin-mineral supplements, homeopathy, herbs, and acupuncture. Is one therapy any better than another? It's hard to say. "Conventional therapies all concentrate on killing the cancer directly. They miss the mark when it comes to the immune system. Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation all suppress the immune system; however, they can be useful for what is termed 'debulking,'" says Dr. Goldstein. Debulking refers to reducing the mass of a tumor. In certain cases, debulking can buy more time for an immune enhancement program to take effect," adds Dr. Goldstein. And that's when the natural cancer therapies come into play. There are many ways to reinforce your pet's immune system. It's just a matter of what works best on the animal.

Natural Therapy: Anticancer Herbs and Homeopathy In addition to a power-packed diet for your cancer-afflicted pet, research shows that when herbs and homeopathic remedies team up, they create a superpowerful weapon in the war against cancer. For starters, herbs can help nourish a dog or cat after chemotherapy or radiation treatment, which leave a pet weak or thin. Herbs also are used to treat pain. Dr. Cheryl Schwartz, a San Francisco-based holistic veterinarian, explains the Chinese belief that pain stems from blockage of qi (pronounced "chee"), or circulation, along the pathways of energy called meridians. "When herbs are prescribed, they address the blockage problem, and also help to strengthen the bones and the tissues surrounding the painful area." Here are six cancer-fighting herbs (work with your vet to find the proper dosage for your pet):