

# Paw Talk

A professional publication for the clients of East Valley Animal Clinic

SUMMER 2014

East Valley Animal Clinic  
5049 Upper 141st Street West  
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124  
Phone: 952-423-6800

Kathy Ranzinger, DVM  
Pam Takeuchi, DVM  
Katie Dudley, DVM  
Mary Jo Wagner, DVM  
Kirsten Jagow, DVM

[www.EastValleyAnimalClinic.com](http://www.EastValleyAnimalClinic.com)



Megan and her dog Putter

## Welcome, Megan

East Valley Animal Clinic is happy to welcome Megan, our newest member of the EVAC family. Megan graduated from Globe College Veterinary Technician program and worked at Burnsville Parkway Animal Hospital, then started with us this spring. We are very happy to have her with us.

Megan likes to spend her free time at her family's cabin. She enjoys anything outdoors. She shares her life with her boyfriend, Grayden, and her Yorkshire Terrier, Putter.

Please welcome Megan the next time you are at the clinic. You can't miss her warm smile!



## Thunderbolts and Lightning, Very Very Frightening!

Summer is here and with that comes thunderstorms and fireworks. While some animals can sleep through the biggest and loudest storms, others develop a phobia to the noise. Signs of noise phobias include drooling, whining, pacing, trembling, a tucked tail, hiding and escape behaviors, such as digging and bolting out of the house.

There are a number of different approaches to reducing noise phobias. Homeopathic preparations can ease mild anxiety, and lavender scent has been shown to soothe some dogs as well. There is a product called the Thundershirt®, which is a tight fitting body wrap (similar to a swaddling cloth for an infant), that provides significant anxiety relief for many dogs. Playing calming music and putting the dog in a room where they can't hear the noise can also help.

Behavior modification is very important for pets with noise phobias. There are exercises that you can do to help desensitize them to the noise, and there are even recordings of thunderstorms on CDs that you can purchase that can be played very softly at first, with increasing volume over time. It is important that this is done in a positive way. Staying with your dog and acting calm and cheerful can help show him or her that the noise doesn't frighten you, but it's important not to reward your pet's fear behavior by petting and soothing it each time you hear a thunderclap. We have information that can help you get started with this, so please call if you have questions.

In some situations, medications can help calm pets with noise phobias. The goal of medication is to reduce the anxiety. Please contact us to discuss the best way to help your pet feel comfortable the next time a thunderstorm rolls in.



Thundershirts can also help reduce the anxiety of coming to the veterinarian.





# Warning Signs of Cancer\*

## 1. Abnormal swellings that persist or continue to grow

Pet your pet! This is the best way to find lumps, bumps or swellings that could be anywhere on the body.

## 2. Sores that do not heal

Non-healing sores can be a sign of infection or cancer. Your veterinarian can determine the reason why the sore is not healing.

## 3. Weight loss

If your pet is not on a diet but is losing weight, illness could be to blame.

## 4. Loss of appetite

It is not normal for pets to lose their appetite. This may be a sign of illness.

## 5. Bleeding or discharge from any body opening

Bleeding can occur for numerous reasons—most of which are abnormal. Vomiting and diarrhea are abnormal discharges as well!

## 6. Offensive odor

This is a common sign, especially for tumors in the mouth, nose or anus.

## 7. Difficulty eating or swallowing

This is a common sign of cancers of the mouth and neck region.

## 8. Hesitation to exercise or loss of stamina

This can be one of the first signs that your pet is not feeling well.

## 9. Persistent lameness

There could be many causes of lameness, including nerve, muscle or bone cancer.

## 10. Difficulty breathing, urinating or defecating

If your pet experiences any of these symptoms please have them evaluated by a veterinarian.

\*Used with permission, courtesy of Colorado State University Flint Animal Cancer Center [www.csuanimalcancercenter.org](http://www.csuanimalcancercenter.org)

# Cancer In Pets

Most of us have been, or will be, affected by cancer during our lives – whether it be ourselves, our family members, our friends or our pets. It's always a frightening diagnosis, but scientific breakthroughs and evolving treatment options are creating better odds of survival. Still, cancer is the leading cause of death in dogs over the age of two, as well as the leading cause of death in older cats.

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells. The name encompasses a broad group of diseases; in fact, there are more than 100 different types of cancer. Normally, the cells in our bodies multiply and die within a finely choreographed balance to maintain the right number of cells and healthy tissue. When the process goes wrong and cells multiply too quickly, they may undergo molecular changes in the DNA and form a mass called a neoplasm, or tumor. Tumors can be malignant (cancerous) or benign (non-cancerous).

Benign tumors are less dangerous and usually remain localized. They can create additional problems, however, if they grow to a size that impedes movement or nearby organs. Malignant tumors contain cells that are able to spread to other parts of the body by invading nearby tissue or traveling through the bloodstream or lymphatic system, in a process called metastasis. A cancer is typically named for the place where it originated.

The causes of cancer are not always known, and the known causes are very diverse and often complex. Genetics plays a role, as do environmental factors, such as exposure to known carcinogens, or cancer-causing agents, such as tobacco, pesticides, herbicides and many more.

Cancer cannot always be prevented, but we do know that maintaining a healthy weight, feeding a nutritious diet and providing plenty of exercise helps pets' immune systems stay healthier. Limiting exposure to known carcinogens, such as second-hand smoke (which has been implicated in several pet cancers) and pesticides helps lower the risk of environmentally-caused cancer.

Cancer is often treatable, and sometimes curable. Treatment depends on many factors, including the type and location, along with your pet's overall health.

- **Surgery** to remove a tumor is the most common treatment for cancers that have not metastasized.
- **Chemotherapy** is the use of drugs to try to either kill or control the growth of cancer cells.
- **Radiation therapy** utilizes ionizing radiation to kill cancer cells by damaging the DNA within the cells.
- **Additional treatments**, such as radioactive iodine therapy and immunotherapy, are options in some situations.

Some cancers are curable, especially when caught early. In other cases, treatment may not be curative but can help improve your pet's quality of life. Palliative options (treatment that is intended to bring comfort and relieve pain but not to cure) include the above treatments, along with pain medications and nutritional support.





**“Hounds used to find things using their sense of smell, but now I use a search tool called Google Nose!”**

## Super Sleuths

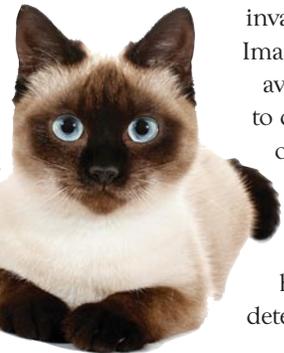
Troy, a Doberman Pinscher, was only four months old when he alerted his owner, Diane, to a malignant lump in her breast. Max, a collie mix, is credited by his owner, Maureen, for doing the same thing. Anecdotes such as these have lead researchers to investigate dogs' ability to sniff out cancer, and studies have been published or are now underway confirming that dogs can detect lung, breast, colorectal, bladder, prostate, ovarian and skin cancers.

While sight is the primary sense for humans, smell is the primary sense for dogs. A human has about five million olfactory (smell) receptors in his nose, cats have 19 million, and dogs have more than 220 million! They also have a greater supply of nerves that carry the information to a highly developed olfactory center in the brain. By most estimates, dogs' sense of smell is 100,000 times better than ours.

Tumors emit volatile chemicals, and biochemical markers have been found in the exhaled breath of patients with some cancers. Dogs are able to detect these markers with surprising accuracy: some studies with breast and lung cancer have shown dogs detected the cancer in breath samples with 88% specificity, which means they correctly excluded non-cancerous samples, and 99% sensitivity, meaning they correctly identified cancerous samples.

For humans, cancer screening and detection is often expensive and invasive; for example, think colonoscopies, mammograms and biopsies. Imagine if low cost, non-invasive, highly accurate early detection was available simply by blowing into a tube? Scientists are currently trying to develop a mechanical nose, but so far, dogs are more sophisticated at odor detection.

The Penn Vet Working Dog Center (at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine) is currently training dogs to detect ovarian cancer. Read about it and watch a video here: <http://pennvetwdc.org/research/research-projects/ovarian-cancer-detection/>



## Common Cancers

There are many different kinds of cancer that affect cats and dogs. In both dogs and cats, certain breeds tend to be at higher risk for some cancers. This brief overview describes some common cancers:

1. *Mast Cell Tumors (MCT)* are a very common skin cancer. Mast cells are specialized cells that occur in the skin and some other tissues such as the respiratory tract. They may be benign or malignant.
2. *Lymphoma* is a cancer of the white blood cells, or lymphocytes, and can occur in the spleen, liver and other organs. It is one of the more common cancers in dogs. Certain breeds are at higher risk. Feline lymphoma is common in cats, and may be caused by the feline leukemia virus, or FeLV.
3. *Mammary Gland (breast tissue) Tumors* are common in both dogs and cats. While almost 50% of them are benign in dogs, in cats they are usually malignant. This is considered the third most common cancer in cats, yet some studies have shown that spayed cats are 40%-60% less likely to develop this form of cancer.
4. *Hemangiosarcoma* is a malignant cancer that affects the blood vessels, and is typically found in the spleen, liver or heart. It is a very aggressive cancer. It is more common in dogs than any other species, and there appears to be a genetic link, as it is far more prevalent in certain breeds, such as Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers and Boxers.

**“Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet.”**

– Colette





## Tick Talk

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, 2014 is likely to be a bad year for ticks. Ticks can carry many diseases, including Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis. All pets that go outdoors are at risk of being bitten by ticks. Pets at a higher risk include those that spend a lot of time

outdoors, especially in tall grass and wooded areas.

We recommend regular use of tick preventives, such as Frontline, Certifect or our newest product, NexGard. NexGard is a chewable monthly flea and tick preventive.

Symptoms of tick-borne diseases range from subtle to severe, and vary by disease. They can include lameness, lethargy, loss

of appetite, fever and neurological problems. Even if your pet doesn't have any symptoms, it may have been exposed to diseases through the bite of an infected tick.

We offer a simple, in-house blood test called the SNAP® 4Dx® that detects exposure to three tick-borne diseases and one mosquito-borne disease (heartworms).

*If my dog doesn't have any signs of disease, why should I have him screened?*

The results of the 4Dx test can help you determine if your pet has been exposed to a tick-borne disease. A positive result indicates "exposure" to infectious agents but not necessarily "the disease." Some dogs harbor the infection "sub-clinically" with no obvious signs, and others can fight the disease off and never have a problem. A positive test means it is time for a serious discussion with your veterinarian about tick exposure,

*continued below*



5049 Upper 141st Street West

Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124



PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #375  
NASHUA, NH

### East Valley Animal Clinic

**NOW OFFERING \$30.00 OFF THE  
SNAP® 4Dx® Test**

- Heartworm • Lyme disease
  - Canine anaplasmosis • Canine ehrlichia
- Quantities are limited.*

#### TICK TALK... *continued*

tick protection options, and vaccine pros and cons. We may also recommend a thorough exam and further testing for your dog.

Screening for tick-borne diseases in your pet can give you an idea about your own exposure risk. Studies have shown that dogs are reliable "sentinels" for tick-borne diseases in humans; that is, the number of humans that test positive often correlates to the number of positive dogs.

## Don't delay...

If you're planning a trip this summer and can't take your pet, there are many options for care while you're gone. Traditional boarding facilities, in-home care, friends and relatives are all good options. Call early, because summer is a busy season.

Boarding facilities require your pet be up-to-date on vaccines. Rabies, distemper and the bordatella vaccine are required by most kennels, and should be given at least ten days prior to your dog's stay.

You can check your pet's vaccine status online with your Petly account, or give us a call.

