

For Cancer Patients and Their Loved Ones with Pets: What Your Veterinarian Would Like You to Know

If you or your loved one has cancer, your veterinarian would like you to know:

- It's important that your pets are up to date on their vaccines, fecal testing and anti-parasitic medications for fleas, ticks and skin mites.
- Make sure your pets' toenails are short and smooth so you don't get scratched. (Cancer patients occasionally get infections and cellulitis due to scrapes from their pets.)
- If your pet has had any parasites recently and you are immunocompromised*, it's important to let your veterinarian know. They will want to discuss with you how to ensure that your pets' parasites won't harm you.

* Note: Immunocompromised means having a weakened immune system. People who are immunocompromised have a reduced ability to fight infections and other diseases. https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/immunocompromised

- If you think your pet has ingested any of your cancer or other medications (such as oral chemotherapy or even ibuprofen), contact your veterinarian immediately.
- If you're comfortable, please let your veterinarian know about your cancer diagnosis. Your veterinarian and you can plan for how to best take care of your pets during your cancer treatment. For example, your treatment may occasionally result in your having difficulties with routine pet duties such as dog walking, lifting heavy things such as large bags of pet food, etc. Your cancer treatment may also result in your experiencing fatigue on occasion. Having a plan in place for your pet that includes family, friends, colleagues or even your friendly veterinarian can give you the peace of mind to know that your beloved pet is well taken care of.

CancerCare would like you to know:

If you need additional educational resources related to how you can best care for your pet as you or your loved one undergoes cancer treatment, you can find a number of helpful Cancer*Care* resources at www.cancercare.org/paw, including (among others):

- "Suggested Questions to Ask Your Health Care Provider Team"
- "Living with Your Pet after a Cancer Diagnosis"
- "The Benefits of Sharing Your Life with a Pet"
- "What to Know if You are Undergoing Radiation Therapy and Have a Pet"
- "What to Know if You are Undergoing Chemotherapy and Have a Pet"

Cancer*Care* also provides limited financial assistance (depending upon the availability of funding) to cancer patients who meet eligibility requirements to help with costs related to taking care of pets. For additional information, please visit **www.cancercare.org/paw** or call Cancer*Care* at **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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