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From: lissa.scott [lissa.scott@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, July 12, 2008 12:44 PM
To: 'ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com'
Subject: DOE Topic #48: Cancer #1 Canine Killer

Hi All,

Since this is such an important topic for all dog owners, I've merged yesterday's University of Colorado research post below with my research this morning. I am posting them as Dog Owner Education Topic #47: Cancer #1 Canine Killer.

This morning I spent time browsing the Morris Animal Foundation site, and the University of Colorado and Cornell University oncology research web sites. It seems that cancer is the #1 killer of our canine companions not only because veterinarians are getting better at diagnosing and reporting it, but also because of improved owner care. Prior to this decade, more dogs died from preventable causes – infectious disease, accidents, and diet-related -- before they became seniors. However in the past 10 years, owners have become more diligent in seeking veterinary care and getting their dogs vaccinated, improved their living environment through confinement and management, plus high-quality diets are now widely available. The result is that we are seeing greater numbers of dogs live to old age and develop the typical geriatric diseases – and cancer is #1.

I learned that a [1997 study](#) showed the following breed mortality rates for cancers: Boxer (36.9 percent), Giant Schnauzer (36.9 percent), Bernese Mountain Dog (32.7 percent), Irish Wolfhound (24.8 percent), Cocker Spaniel (22.2 percent), Doberman Pinscher (22.2 percent), Pomeranian (19.0 percent), Newfoundland (16.8 percent), German Shepherd Dog (14.8 percent), Saint Bernard (13.1 percent), **Great Dane (12.3 percent)**, and Greyhound (12.3 percent.) However Colorado State reported that the breed most prone to cancers today is Golden Retrievers, with 70% of this breed succumbing and Bernese Mountain Dogs ranking a close second.

The two most common canine cancers in all dogs are lymphoma and osteosarcoma, the latter being most prevalent in large and giant breed dogs. Other common cancers include mast cell, oral cancer, liver/spleen cancers, soft tissue sarcomas, and brain cancers. If there's any good news here, the most treatable cancers are soft-tissue sarcomas, mast cell, and osteosarcomas. Osteosarcoma and lymphoma are also the two forms of cancer most commonly seen in the Great Dane.

The University of Colorado has the most advanced veterinary oncology cancer center in the US, and is the only Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) with a state-of-the-art pinpoint radiology treatment chamber. It has been used successfully to treat brain and oral cancers, and osteosarcoma. The "limb-sparing" treatment from this chamber has enabled some osteosarcoma patients to avoid amputation and resulted in remission of the cancer. Their Veterinary Teaching Hospital accepts individual owner's pets or veterinary referrals: <http://csuvets.colostate.edu/> and they have an oncology consultation line at 1-970-297-4195.

Cornell University in Ithaca, NY has the most advanced oncology research center on the east coast and (good to know!) they're only a 6 hour drive from me in Maryland. Cornell's Veterinary Teaching Hospital's web site is here: <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/hospital/companion.htm> and contact numbers are posted.

So what can we dog owners do when most cancers aren't easily detectable until they are advanced? Since cancer is a silent killer, the first line of defense is owner awareness. If your dog exhibits loss of appetite, weight loss, changes in eating or swallowing, discharge in any body opening, changes in urination or defecation, or particularly for us Dane owners, loss of stamina or lameness, get him/her to a vet ASAP. Since some cancers can be detected by hand, get used to giving your dog a monthly "hand-exam" to check for irregularities, lumps, nodes, and sores that don't heal. The Morris Foundation offers a video showing how to conduct a monthly hand-exam here: <http://partnersah.vet.cornell.edu/node/321>

Beyond what you can do to detect cancer on your own, a dog's best defense against cancer is veterinary detection and early treatment. Once your dog becomes a senior (6 YO for Danes), your semi-annual vet visit should include bloodwork, chest x-ray (and limb x-rays for Danes), and an abdominal ultrasound. Notice that I said "semi-annual vet visit" because a dogs age accelerates more rapidly than humans, so once-a-year vet exams would be equivalent to humans only getting a checkup every 2+ years. Too much can happen too fast to wait that long!

The earlier post is here:

Sharing an important article and one that hits home with me. We lost our first and second dogs to cancers, and so many of my Dane-owning friends have lost their companions to osteosarcoma. Awareness and early veterinary intervention may help save a dog's life, so please take the time to view the presentation.

Canine Cancer #1 Fear of Dog Lovers Web Exclusive By Morris Animal Foundation Provides News on Latest Breakthroughs - Crucial Facts for Dog Owners

DENVER, July 11, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Dog owners and lovers in the United States view canine cancer as the greatest health threat to their beloved pets. They are correct. One in four dogs die of cancer. Cancer is the number one cause of death in dogs over the age of 2.....

Click here to read more: <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/canine-cancer-1-fear-dog/story.aspx?guid=%7B01B650C0-9A80-4F54-9028-1D50957F22D4%7D&dist=hppr>

or

click here: <http://tinyurl.com/5kq3l7>

Thanks in advance for educating yourself to help dogs and their owners!

Lissa Scott

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MAGDRL web: <http://www.magdrl.org>

MAGDRL events: <http://www.lissa.net/Joya/MAGDRL.htm>

"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings

