

Reducing Your Pet's Cancer Risk: A Holistic Perspective

by Cynthia Holley-Connolly - Staff Writer, Only Natural Pet Store

The prospect of a cancer diagnosis in our pets is one of the most profound fears we can experience as pet guardians. Cancer is a sadly common occurrence in our cats and dogs, with cancer cases ever on the rise. Despite being common, well-documented and vastly researched, cancer in humans and companion animals is still not widely understood. Why do so many pets get cancer? Why do some animals get cancer and others do not, and what are the causes?

Scientific evidence suggests that factors like genetics, toxic exposure, and stress all may play a role in the development of cancer in pets. Because so many factors can contribute to cancer, it is not possible to pinpoint one cause, or a one-size-fits-all cure. Conventional cancer treatments like radiation and chemotherapy can present other problems for these health-challenged pets, and even the best of available therapies may only prolong a pet's life, never curing the cancer.

Because cancer is so mysterious and powerful in its ability to destroy health and deplete us emotionally (and financially), many people feel overwhelmed, and take a fatalistic approach to the prevention of cancer. We know so little, and cancer seems to strike us and our pets in such a seemingly random fashion - what is the point of trying to do anything about it?

You can do something however, that will greatly reduce your pet's risk for developing cancer. The key is in understanding a simple fact about the root cause of cancer and applying it in every aspect of your pet's life.

Cancer develops when abnormal (mutated) cells begin to reproduce in the body at alarming rates, and begin to interfere with the normal functioning of healthy cells, organs or body tissues, including the blood. Our pets' bodies produce so many cells every day that large numbers of abnormal cells are created all the time. In a healthy body, the immune system responds quickly and accurately to identify and destroy abnormal cells, in essence, healing itself before these mutant cells start reproducing and causing damage to healthy cells.

Holistic physicians like Dr. Andrew Weil, and holistic veterinarians like Dr. Martin Goldstein offer great insight into the most fundamental cause of cancer: **the failure of the body's immune system to heal itself**. These doctors emphatically

state that cancer can only develop in the body when the immune system is so overwhelmed that it is unable to keep up with the job of handling mutated cells. And there lies the key to preventing cancer - supporting the body's immune system so that it can do its job as nature intended.

The basic critical fact to understand is this: **a healthy immune system will not allow mutant cells to develop into cancer.** It seems simplistic, but putting this idea into practice in your life with your pet is the single most important thing you can do to minimize the likelihood that your cat or dog will develop cancer. In order to activate this idea, it helps to recognize what factors contribute to immune system overload in both people and pets.

Our bodies are bombarded with toxic chemicals and electromagnetic radiation. Our pets are exposed to chemicals we use on ourselves, on them, and in our homes. Many more chemicals get into our body systems through residues on food, in the air we breathe, and the water we drink. We are overwhelmed by stress in our fast-paced lives and often fail to exercise and rest fully - nature's antidotes to stress. This has a trickle down effect on our pets; when we are stressed, they absorb stress from us. And of course, many pets often eat substandard food, made with chemicals, unhealthy additives, and lacking the nutrients their immune systems need to perform properly.

With all of these factors overwhelming our immune systems, it's really no wonder why we get sick. Our immune systems are too undernourished and weakened by stress and toxins to perform their primary job of destroying foreign, mutated and damaged cells. Cancer is on the rise in people and pets because our immune systems are stressed far more than they were in the past, and unless we take an active approach to immune support, we really are leaving things up to chance.

Take these proactive steps now to help reduce your pet's risk of developing cancer by supporting the immune system:

- Provide a natural diet with as many fresh, raw, whole foods as possible
- Offer only purified, filtered water - tap water always contains chemicals and bottled water commonly contains leached toxic plastic compounds
- Eliminate chemical toxins used in and around your home - everything from cleaning products to scented candles and air fresheners
- Do not smoke - especially around your pet
- Avoid over-vaccination, and never vaccinate a sick animal
- Keep pets off and away from televisions and computers

- Reduce your pet's exposure to toxins like fertilizers & pesticides
- Avoid chemical flea & tick products and use [natural insect control products](#) instead
- Reduce emotional stress for your pet and yourself - pets absorb their guardians' stress
- Give your pet [antioxidants](#) & the right supplements to [support immune functions](#) and promote [cellular health](#)
- Exercise and play with your cat or dog

If you are knowledgeable on holistic pet care topics, these steps will be familiar to you, but really understanding that they can help reduce the risk of cancer will help reinforce their benefits in your mind and we hope, motivate and encourage you to go the extra mile for your pet's health. One last tip: Remember that the key to reducing cancer risk is to nourish, protect and support your pet's immune system!

If you are interested in more information on Cancer and Immune Support, here are related articles in our [Holistic Healthcare Library](#):

[Holistic Cancer Prevention and Care](#)

[Overview of the Immune System](#)

[Question/Answer - Dog with Cancer](#)

[Question/Answer - Cat with Cancer](#)

[Building a Healthy Immune System](#)

[Natural Immunity - Supporting Health from the Inside Out](#)

[How Antioxidants Influence Pet Health](#)

[Sixteen Steps to Detox Your Pet](#)

We also suggest that you read or articles, "[Natural Alternatives for Flea & Tick Control](#)," and "[The Truth About Vaccinations](#)," and strongly recommend that you read Dr. Martin Goldstein's excellent book, [The Nature of Animal Healing](#).