

 THE
HOLISTIC HOUND 



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LIVING WITH CANCER

— JO ARBON, Founder Holistic Hound —



So, despite everything, your dog has cancer.

First of all – be kind to yourself. Try not to blame yourself for being responsible for your pets' disease, you cannot know what your contribution was. When dogs get sick with cancer, people often ask what they did wrong. Did you wait too long to get help. Did you do enough.

All that matters is that you did your best

Before you even start your discussion with your vet, remember that they also do not have all the answers. So be kind to them too. They are also simply doing the best they can with the knowledge they have. But also remember that their knowledge can be lacking, they are busy people who's job it is to see hundreds of pets each year, and not necessarily have time to go into a lot of detail about particular nuances of treatment options.

Above all else, if your dog has cancer you need to know what particular cancer you are dealing with.

And then ask your Vet how much experience they have of this cancer. If you are not confident that they are familiar with the most up to date and holistic way of approaching this cancer, you can always get referred to a specialist oncologist.

“Despite every good intention and action, there are simply too many unknowns. There are far too many forms of cancer and we don't have enough information on which to base definitive recommendations.

The best you can do is make your decisions based on the best advice available to you”

Current statistics show that over the age of 10 there is a 50% chance that your dog will get cancer.



Talking about Cancer with your Vet

If the Vet is recommending a regime of conventional treatments, be they medications, chemo or radiotherapy you need to know about the likely outcome as a result of these recommended therapies .You need answers to the following interrelated and essential questions:

“Will the treatment you’re proposing lengthen my dog’s life? Is this treatment likely to result in complete remission? What is the likelihood it will actually shorten my dog’s life or even kill my dog?”

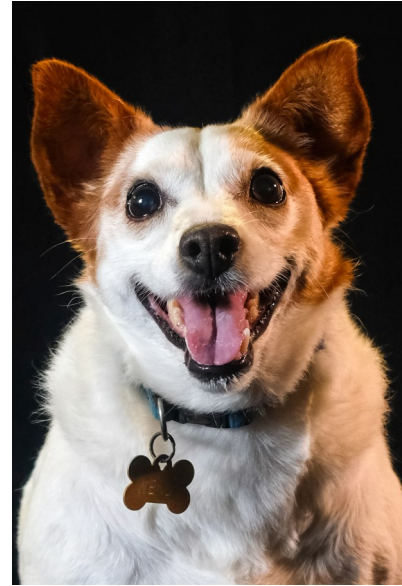
“Will the treatment you’re proposing cause side effects? If so, what will they be and how long will they last?”

“What will my dog’s quality of life be during and after treatment? What is the likelihood of permanent damage,

“What are the chances of the cancer coming back? “

“What will happen if we do nothing?”

“What supporting therapies would you recommend to accompany this treatment, to reduce any side effects or improve the efficacy of the treatment?”



Conventional treatments AND Alternative treatments

Conventional cancer treatments can be effective and give your dog additional lifespan, however they also often destroy both cancer cells and healthy cells and can leave your pet with a lower quality of life than you would like.

Conventional medicine treats cancers mainly by using surgery, to remove cancerous tissue, and using chemotherapy or radiotherapy to poison or kill the cells that are growing incorrectly. Neither of these treatment methods actually address why the body has allowed cancerous cells to grow. And neither of these methods will strengthen the body so it can prevent the problem returning.

They are also often twinned with ongoing medications, including anti-inflammatories, pain killers, anti-nausea, steroids etc which can further challenge the body’s natural abilities in recovery; although providing necessary support in many cases.

A holistic approach is about considering all treatment options, and coming up with an action plan that uses as many options, in combination wherever appropriate, to support your pet recover, recuperate and extend their longevity without compromising their quality of life.

So it should not be a case of Conventional vs Alternative.

The overall aim of treatment for cancer, whether or not it can actually cured, should be to manage your pet’s vitality and well-being, enabling them to survive for much longer than would be expected with conventional treatments alone, in a dignified manner



Conventional (allopathic) Treatments

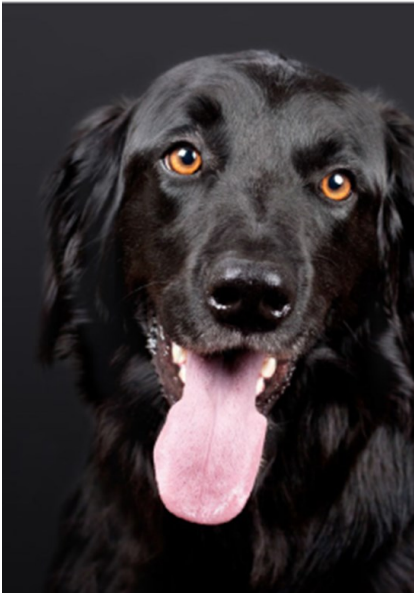
Biopsy: A sample of tissue is taken from your dog and sent to the lab to be analysed. The cells are then examined to see if they're cancerous.

The problem with biopsy is that it tends to seed cancer cells. Seeding means the cancer cells can be dislodged during the biopsy and they can travel to other parts of the body.

For this reason you may find it better to go straight to surgery if there is a high level of suspicion that the tumour is cancerous.

Surgery: Surgery allows the vet to collect a good amount of healthy tissue around the tumour, to make sure all of the cancer cells are cut out. This reduces the risk of seeding and metastasis. It's important to remember that the tumour you see may only be the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Removing a tumour does nothing to treat cancer. It just removes the visual indication of its presence. As a dog owner, it can be a comfort to see a tumour disappear. But if you don't address the underlying issues that caused it the disease will persist and manifest elsewhere in the body.



It's vital that you also question the validity of both chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Particularly in the treatment of metastatic cancer

Chemotherapy

Before embarking on Chemo you need to ask if it is likely to result in a full cure? In other words, will this treatment destroy every one of the cancer cells in your dog's body? If not, in all likelihood, there will be a return of cancer. And chances are it will be in a more aggressive form and far less responsive to chemotherapy. It is also likely to have spread throughout the body.

This mostly happens in a matter of months.

Once cancer has spread throughout the body, it will unavoidably result in the patient's death. And during this time period, the patient's quality of life may also have been severely impaired.

A study released in 2004 on humans revealed that chemotherapy produced no significant benefit in the vast majority of cancers that oncologists deal with on a daily basis. The study found that the use of chemotherapeutic drugs made a contribution to the 5-year survival rate (of Australian adults) of just 2.3%; in the USA, the survival rate was even less 2.1%.

Finally, it should also be noted that these drugs are generally very expensive.



Radiation therapy

Radiation therapy is the medical use of high dose radiation to destroy cancer cells. Radiation therapy is most commonly used to destroy, or limit the growth of cancer cells left behind after a tumour has been surgically removed. Or it may also be used to reduce the size of very large tumours prior to surgery, making the surgery more manageable. However, not all tumours are responsive.

RT must be administered under anaesthetic, which in itself carries its own risks.

On a positive note radiation therapy is typically a localised treatment rather than whole-body therapy in the majority of cases, meaning that any side effects are limited to the area of the body being treated for the tumour.

Side effects typically occur in tissues that are rapidly growing, such as skin and the mucous membranes of the oral and nasal cavities. These effects can be uncomfortable to the patient and typically need painkillers.

Late effects of radiation occur in tissues that have slowly or non-dividing cells, such as the brain, spinal cord, heart, and bone. Late effects from radiation generally occur no sooner than six months following treatment but may appear years later. Late effects can be serious, even life-threatening, and they generally do not improve once they occur. Treatment is tailored as closely as possible to minimise these risks, but they do need to be discussed with your Vet.

Similar to chemotherapy, RT is costly.

Supporting Medications

Every conventional medication your dog gets can have a negative impact on his ability to heal.

Some of the drugs your vet may recommend in support of cancer treatment: Antibiotics, pain meds, anti-nausea, antacids, anti-diarrhoea, anti-inflammatories. Whatever is recommended, always remember to ask why it is being suggested.

Obviously these conventional medications are sometimes necessary to keep pets comfortable. But they should still be used judiciously, and for as short a time as possible; and only whenever alternatives are not available.

For example, dandelion leaf has been found to be as effective as Frusomide, often prescribed as a diuretic to rid the body of excess fluid build up (oedema) which can happen with cancers. Ginger is a well known herb for helping with nausea and indigestion.

Every drug requires more work from the liver and other detoxifying organs to remove it from his body. Using energy and resources that should be going into dealing with the cancer. Supporting as many of the affected organs and systems in conjunction with these medications is crucial to re-establishing balance and good health.

Most conventional medications also damage the microbiome, so repopulating the gut flora and friendly bacteria can also be key.

Anti-histamines.

The body reacts to cancer invasion by producing histamine as a line of defence. This is what causes the inflammation and can therefore also help disease progression as it puts the cells under stress. Regular dosage of anti-histamine can help to control this. Suggested dosage is 1mg per 10lbs of body weight. An alternative to medical anti-histamines is quercetin and bromelain

Dietary supplements:

As discussed in detail in our Cancer Prevention booklet, if you want to support the immune system you need to heal the gut, feed the microbiome and provide adequate nutrition. So the following recommendations are in addition to those in the prevention booklet.

- Vitamin D3 acts more like a hormone than a vitamin because it helps to activate immune system lymphocytes. It helps control cell growth, cell differentiation, synthesis of enzymes and repair of DNA. Studies show that individuals deficient in vitamin D3 have a higher risk for cancer. New evidence is showing that it may even help shrink tumours by killing cancer cells and repairing tissues.
- Cottage cheese contains Lysine. There is evidence that Lysine is effective at stopping metastasis of the cancer cells. Cottage cheese and meat are very high in lysine and the effects of the enzymes in the cottage cheese help make lysine and the EFAs in fish oil more water soluble and available to the body to help heal. You may need to blend and hide it in food, as dogs often do not like it too much.
- Bone broth is ideal when appetite is low, or immune systems low, as it is a great source of nutrients and irresistible to dogs; very easy to digest too. A great way of rehydrating and supporting them through rough times. It can be simple to make, with lots of recipes online.
- Regular addition of pre and probiotics - either natural sources (such as kefir, artichokes, sprouts, mussels) or supplements, ideally making sure they are animal specific varieties as they require different live strands. See prevention booklet for more on pre and probiotics.
- Adding in digestive enzymes each day will help alleviate the stress of digestion.
- Green Tea: provide a bowl of cold green tea for your dog to drink from, as well as a separate bowl of water. Green tea has components proven to fight cancer cells.



- Kelp: Macro-algae contains a whole host of antioxidant compounds; and there are multiple studies showing seaweed fights cancer. It is worth doing a bit of homework as to which seaweed type might best suit the type of cancer your pet has as it is not one size fits all
 - Molasses! This is also known to fight cancer cells in osteosarcoma, so suggest adding a smidge of this in their food each day, if they will accept it
 - Curcumin (Turmeric) as Golden Paste: turmeric combined with fat for bioavailability. This is widely used by many of my clients who have musculoskeletal problems (both dogs and humans!) and they find it hugely beneficial as it is hugely anti-inflammatory, and a great overall digestive support. However, it also has widely recognised anti-cancer properties., that can change the growth and spread of cancer cells, including those found in breast cancer, brain tumours, mast cell tumours, and osteosarcomas.
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Other Supplements to consider (*This is not an exhaustive list; and we would recommend discussing these with your Vet before including in your dog's treatment protocol*)

CoQ10 is a supplement that you can get in most health stores. It is also found in fermented fish stock. It supports the joints, thyroid, gut, liver, skin and coat, brain functions, the immune system, and heart health. It helps to improve blood circulation, so will help with overall detoxing and provision of fighting blood cells to the infected areas.

Transfer factors are essentially the same as the colostrum puppies get to build their immune system from their mum. When your dog has cancer, they can't produce the amount of transfer factors they need, so supplementation can be very useful.

Superoxide Dismutase (SOD) is an enzyme that patrols the body and seeks out superoxide, which is one of the body's deadliest free radicals. Phytoplankton contains the highest levels of SOD in the natural world, and it's also absorbed differently than food. Because it's 5 times smaller than a red blood cell, tiny phytoplankton bypass the digestive system and can be directly absorbed by your dog's cells. So if not already giving something like **Krill oil**, you should look to add this in.

Artemisinin (derived from Wormwood). This Chinese herb has been used to treat malaria and has now been shown to destroy many types of cancer cells as well. Unlike conventional cancer drugs like chemo, Artemisinin seems to target cancer cells and leave normal cells unharmed.

Poly-MVA is a liponic acid mineral complex. It supports oxygenation of cells and tissues and improves cellular function.

CBD Oil (cannibidoil)

There are multiple benefits to use cannabis oil, and it has been made legal in this country just recently so is available to buy. Research shows CBD oil and other substances in hemp and cannabis have an anti-tumour effect. Studies show both THC and or CBD can kill these cancer cells and stop tumour growth.

For dogs who have a poor appetite due to their cancer, cannabis can help stimulate their appetite.

And finally, both THC and CBD can prevent the development of blood vessels in tumours. Studies show this blocks their access to nutrition and starves them.

For cancer, recommended dosage of 5mg of CBD per 5kg body weight daily.

Any blood thinning supplements (such as turmeric) should be stopped prior to any surgery

Apocaps was created by Dr Damian Dressler, author of The Dog Cancer Survival Guide. It contains luteolin, apigenin, curcumin and silymarin, as well as gingerols, beta glucans, and l-glutamine; all of which support the body's natural process of apoptosis – the clearing out of old and damaged cells from the body.

Anti-parasitic medicines **Febenden (Panacur)**: You may well know this medicine more as a chemical wormer. However, recent studies have shown that fenbendazole inhibits tumour cell growth in vivo by inducing apoptosis of tumour cells

If you are using human supplements and not sure of dosage for your pet, you can adjust it based on your pet's weight. (Human supplements are based on an assumed weight of 60kg).

Avoid synthetic supplements. Supplementation should be naturally-sourced, from food wherever possible, and targeted specifically for the individual needs of your dog.

Medicinal Mushrooms

Many mushrooms including shiitake, maitake and reishi have been found to be high in alpha and beta glucans, which help modulate the immune system.

In addition, many mushrooms have been found to slow growth and kill cancer cells. Reishi and maitake mushrooms in particular have been found to protect the body from chemotherapy side effects

Most medicinal mushrooms have two main medicinal components: Polysaccharide-K (PSK) and polysaccharide-P (PSP).

Both PSK and PSP are called beta-D-glucans. These beta-glucans can bind directly to receptors in immune cells and trigger immune changes that can increase the activity of some immune cells, including natural killer (NK) cells and T cells, or restore a healthy immune response.

In fact, PSP has been approved as an anti-cancer drug in Japan and China. And PSK is the main component of an anti-cancer drug approved in Japan called Krestin.

Some of the most popular and useful mushrooms include: Shiitake, Maitake, Reishi, Turkey tail, Cordyceps. Ideally, you'll want to find a blend of 6 or 7 mushrooms, as they work synergistically.



Chiropractic Care

Finding a chiropractor, physical therapist, or massage therapist to maintain proper energy flow of the spine.

Animal chiropractic may be used as a complementary therapy to conventional cancer treatment in order to relieve pain or address joint or mobility issues.

Homeopathy:

Homeopathy has been used for more than 200 years. It follows Aristotle's theory that "like cures like." A simple example might be that a homeopathic dose of *Allium cepa* (made from onions) could help stop watering eyes and a streaming nose – exactly the symptoms we experience when we chop an onion.

In addition, homeopathy uses the principle of the "minimum dose." Homeopathic remedies are made from natural substances such as plants and minerals that are highly diluted (potentized) and shaken (succussed), which eliminates any toxic effects of the natural substance. For instance, many remedies are made from snake venoms, poisonous plants, and toxic substances like arsenic.

In homeopathy, symptoms are important tools, both for determining which remedy is needed, and for monitoring the healing process.

There are a number of homeopathic remedies that are known to help with cancer treatment (ones that spring to mind are *Rhus Tox*, *Arnica*, and *Calc Carb*). The remedies themselves are cheap and easy to administer, as they do no harm. However they may also not have any benefit.

Ideally we would recommend you can find a homeopathic veterinary practitioner who can put together a bespoke protocol specifically for your pet.



“A 2012 study published in Evidence-Based Complementary Medicine looked at the effectiveness of turkey tail mushrooms in treating dogs with hemangiosarcoma. When the results were analysed, the researchers found the dogs given the PSP had a much longer time until metastasis. And survival time increased with the size of the dose.”

Acupuncture for pets helps to stimulate blood flow and support the immune system, helping to naturally improve the body's ability to heal. It can also be used to help relieve the side effects of conventional cancer treatments. There are acupuncture points that are used to help with cancers, or may be used to help with appetite or breathing difficulty or gut upsets if those symptoms are showing. It is important to find a qualified veterinary acupuncturist to carry out these treatments, as the points are very different.

Essential oils and their individual aroma components showed cancer suppressive activity when tested on a number of human cancer cell lines including glioma, colon cancer, gastric cancer, human liver tumours, pulmonary tumours, breast cancer, leukaemia and others.

Frankincense and Copaiba are two oils that are often incorporated into cancer protocols for dogs

Chinese and Western herbal therapies:

There are a wide number of herbs that have been proven effective against various cancer and tumours. When using herbs for supporting cancer in dogs, it is better to have a specific formula created. Bespoke herbal formulas, ideally formulated by a veterinary herbalist, are selected based on the particular variety of tumour and on the way the individual is reacting against the disease. For the same type of cancer we may use a different herb in a different dog.

Herbs can have specific anticancer mechanisms or be suited to certain specific cancers: For example *Boswellia Serrata* is a great herb for inducing apoptosis (cell death); Ginger (*Zingiber Officinale*) *Zingiber officinale* is widely used in anti-cancer traditional medicine preparations for gastrointestinal, liver and oesophageal cancers; Wormwood (*Artemisia*) has been shown to selectively kill cancer cells in fibrosarcoma; Curcumin has been shown to suppress hepatic tumour growth and metastasis.

Herbs can help support specific organs or functions that are often under stress with cancer. For example Milk Thistle Seed and Dandelion root and leaf are often go to herbs for supporting the liver and kidneys and digestive function.

And yet more herbs provide support in the form of alteratives, antioxidants, analgesics, immune modulators, adaptogens. For example Ashwagandha is an adaptogen, but specifically has demonstrated anti-tumour properties in research.

There are also a wide range of herbs that can help support your pet with the symptoms they may be experiencing with their cancer:

- Appetite loss: Dandelion, peppermint, fennel
- Appetite maintenance: Yucca, Alfalfa
- Colic/Sickness/Vomiting: Chamomile, fennel, peppermint, Ginger, Marshmallow, Licorice/goldenseal if infection/bacteria suspected
- Diarrhoea: Chamomile, raspberry leaf, uva ursi, marshmallow
- Constipation: Dandelion root, milk thistle, licorice, turmeric, marshmallow, flaxseed

It is also important to remember energetics when using herbs. Most herbs have 2- 3 tastes, but generally:

- Bitters: generally cooling; good for digestion
- Carminatives: generally warming
- Pungent: generally heating
- Demulcents: general moistening & cooling, soothing





Further Resources

As you can imagine there is a never ending list of books, websites, blogs, Facebook groups on cancer in our dogs. An impossible number to list, so instead these are our top tips when looking for further information:

- Research your dog breed predispositions and associated articles not only about specific cancer types but also in relation to your dog breed.
- Limit any searches to the last year; cancer is a constantly moving and improving topic with changes in our understanding on an almost daily basis. So try to make sure you are basing your guidance on the most recent thinking
- Try to always go back to actual studies and references; this is not always the case with more natural treatments as they are not always evidence based but you should at least have documented examples.

Some of our recommended resources:

Feeding Dogs, Dr Conor O Brady

Pointing the Bone at Cancer: Ian Billingham

Dog Cancer Survival Guide: Dr Dressler & Ettinger

Dog Cancer Blog.com

Dogs Naturally Magazine

Ozone Therapy

Ozone treatment both supports the immune system and slows cancer growth.

Ozone therapy adds oxygen to tissue, which promotes microcirculation. Bringing more oxygen into the body, especially into areas that are inflamed, alleviates that inflammation. The therapy can also reduce cancer cells, because cancer doesn't like oxygen and doesn't thrive in an oxygenated environment.

Mistletoe injections.

If a cure for cancer is no longer possible, mistletoe therapy is used palliatively to alleviate the disease. The primary goal of mistletoe therapy for tumour diseases is to improve and maintain the quality of life of pets. Many pets, especially dogs, show a rapid improvement in their general condition during mistletoe treatment, with deeper relaxed sleep and an improved appetite.

Tumour-related pain can be reduced, the immune system can be strengthened and the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy can be diminished.

Mistletoe treatment can be performed before or after tumour surgery, after or during chemotherapy or radiation. It must only be done by a qualified person.

Other alternative treatments to look into that have shown positive benefits with progression of cancers, relief from symptoms, emotional balancing and palliative care include the use of Crystals, Reiki and Kinesiology

THE HOLISTIC HOUND



Holistic Hound manufacture a range of highest quality, handmade, products to help support your dog's health & wellbeing.

Products are made in small batches using natural, organic and human grade ingredients, sourced from organically or pharmaceutical quality registered companies. No preservatives, colourings or flavourings.

The products contain a mixture of herbs (roots, seeds, bark & flowers), tinctures, flower essences, hydrosols, & essential oils.



Nutritive supplements: Eat Me & Tummies, Flax oil based range, Golden Paste turmeric & Something Fishy

Parasite control: Worms Away, Ticked Off, Mitee Stuff, Dog Eared

Fundamentals Range for targeted specific health issue support

Everyday health & wellbeing support:

Heal me Quick; Travel Well; Calm & Balmy; Snout & Paw; Bright Eyes; Ditch de Itch; Move your Mutt

Our Philosophy

We are passionate about providing the best health care options for your pets



Our Mission

To encourage the integration of a more natural, biologically appropriate way of life into the everyday health care of your pets; and enabling you to be informed and proactive in their overall well-being

Holistic Hound UK and Ireland have been producing 100% natural, herbal support products since its inception in 2005.

It is run by certified Master Herbalists with a wealth of experience in veterinary herbalism and complementary health care and behaviour since 2002

Material produced by Jo Arbon, Founder Holistic Hound Ireland 2021.

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