

The Hope Line

Summer 2018

Sugars? Spice? Is anything nice?

“I’ve read sugar feeds the cancer cells so I started feeding a homemade diet.”

“When we found out he has cancer, we switched him to a raw diet.”

“Here’s a list of the different supplements we’ve added in to fight the cancer.”



These are comments we hear on a day-to-day basis when diagnosing our patients with cancer and we’re sure you get these questions too! Understandably, owners feel helpless when their pets are diagnosed with cancer and want to do everything in their power to feel like they have some control in fighting the cancer. Unfortunately, the internet is full of misleading and unproven information regarding appropriate cancer patient diets and supplements. While we do not have a deep knowledge of ideal nutritional modifications for cancer patients, there are important things to remember when caring for a cancer patient.

1. The best cancer diet is one meeting all essential nutritional needs and caloric needs. Maintaining a healthy weight can be a tough battle and this doesn’t always mean what you would think. Cancer cells can require tremendous amounts of energy and induce cancer cachexia, significant weight loss through the dramatic breakdown of muscle and fat. In these patients, appropriate calorie consumption is necessary along with getting all necessary vitamins and essential nutrients. Other dogs come in overweight and could use weight loss or they gain a significant amount of weight when the owner begins overfeeding out of sympathy.
2. Many books and websites promote a “cancer diet”; however, there is no evidence for a specific diet or diet strategy for pets with cancer including homemade diets. In a 2012 study out of Tufts University, zero out 27 homemade diets were adequately prepared to meet all essential nutritional requirements for dogs with cancer. One of the most common themes of the “cancer diet” is to “starve” the cancer of glucose by removing carbohydrates from the diet. While this is possible to achieve with cancer cell cultures in a laboratory setting, there is no proof a low carbohydrate diet will help improve survival or remission duration. Any pet being put on a homemade diet should consult with a board-certified veterinary nutritionist to help design a balanced diet for their pet.
3. Raw diets are potentially VERY DANGEROUS for pets with cancer! Raw meat, eggs, and milk all carry a high risk of bacterial and parasitic contamination with *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and other zoonotic pathogens. In a recent European study, 35 frozen raw meat-based diets were analyzed for dangerous pathogens. *Listeria monocytogenes* was found at levels above the threshold for human consumption in 54% of the samples, *E. coli* in 23%, *Salmonella* in 20%, and parasites (including *Sarcocystis cruzi* and *Toxoplasma gondii*) in 11% of samples. Chemotherapy patients often develop a drastic decrease in their neutrophils which will weaken the immune system making these pets drastically more susceptible to food-borne infection.
4. Since many of our chemotherapy agents and other medications come from natural things in the environment, it makes sense there are other supplements or holistic options to be discovered. Unfortunately, there is still little evidence to support the safe use of many of these products and many are marketed without respect to efficacy. Therefore, we are selective about what supplements are recommended and limit these recommendations to products with proven safety data and a reasonable expectation of efficacy based on peer-reviewed research. One of our favorite supplements to use in older patients are high quality fish oils which can help fight inflammation and improve joint health in our older patients. While undergoing radiation and certain chemotherapy drugs, our least favorite supplements are antioxidants which can actually protect cancer cells from the damage we are trying to create!



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Osteosarcoma Study AT014-CCL-17-003

Southeast Veterinary Oncology and Internal Medicine is now enrolling dogs with osteosarcoma who have undergone amputation and chemotherapy in a study of the USDA-conditionally licensed Canine Osteosarcoma Vaccine, Live Listeria Vector (COV-LLV). To be eligible, a dog must meet the following requirements:

Inclusion Criteria

1. Signed Informed Consent (Form 1) case report form (CRF)
2. Client owned dog >1 year of age
3. Body weight \geq 2kg
4. Histopathologic or cytologic diagnosis of osteosarcoma
5. Amputation of the affected limb followed by a completed chemotherapy regimen
6. ECOG Performance score of 0 or 1 [0=normal activity; 1=restricted activity, decreased activity from pre-disease status, 2=compromised, ambulatory only for vital activities, consistently defecates and urinates in acceptable areas]



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Place

Stamp

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Exclusion Criteria

1. Clinically relevant abnormalities on CBC/CS/UA
2. Evidence of pulmonary metastases on 3-view thoracic radiographs
3. Prior immunotherapeutic treatment for osteosarcoma
4. Any uncontrolled medical condition (including other concurrent malignancy) that may be disruptive to the intent and objectives of the study
5. Dog is pregnant, lactating or likely to become pregnant
6. Dog is participating in another study
7. Dog may not be available for the entire study duration

Eligibility will be confirmed by reviewing the dog's medical history, performing a physical exam, taking thoracic radiographs, and submitting routine blood and urine tests. All dogs enrolled in the safety study will be treated with COV-LLV.

Please contact our Jacksonville office (**904.567.7519**) where Dr. Neumann and his team will be conducting the study for additional information.