

## **Dog Cancer Early Detection at Home**

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine's DOG Watch pointed out in a recent article that, "it has been estimated that cancer is the cause of death in 50% of dogs over the age of 10 and that 25 to 30% of all dogs will be stricken with the disease at some point during their lives, regardless of their age."

Early detection is important. In between regular checkups by your vet, you can look out for signs. DOG Watch stresses the importance of dog owner awareness to physical symptoms that might indicate cancer including:


- An open sore that won't heal
- An unusual lump or swollen area that doesn't go away
- Mysterious bleeding from the mouth or anus
- Troubled breathing
- Difficulty in urinating or defecating
- Uncharacteristic lethargy
- Reluctance to exercise
- Sudden weight loss

They also recommend that young dogs receive a yearly physical but dogs older than eight should have a physical at least twice a year.

With my assistance dogs, I've found that their health has changed between the age of five and six. After age five I begin monitoring their health a bit more closely, and schedule a physical exam with the vet every six months.

One way to check on your dog's health is by grooming him or her every day. Not only is this a good bonding exercise but it also gives you a chance to physically scan your dog's body for any lumps or bumps, changes in his skin or other physical signs of potential health concerns.

Conducting routine exams at home with your dog can be just what the doctor ordered!

Marcie and Whistle 

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. (October 2011) "Early Detection of Canine Cancer". DOG Watch. 15(10): 1.

