

Cancer Affects Everyone!



Nebraska State Troopers don pink patches for October

October marks the return of the Pink Patch Project for many law enforcement agencies across the state and many Nebraska State Troopers will be wearing pink NSP patches to honor breast cancer fighters. The effort coincides with Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Pink Patch Project is a national campaign in which many law enforcement officers wear a pink version of their agency's shoulder patch. This is the sixth year that NSP has participated.

"We're proud to be part of the Pink

Patch Project again this year," said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. "This nationwide campaign is a great way to show support for millions of cancer fighters across the country. We're happy to be one of numerous Nebraska law enforcement agencies participating this year".

Throughout October, troopers have the option to replace the standard NSP patch with a pink patch. NSP's pink patch features the NSP emblem in pink and black.

Pink NSP patches are available for

purchase by NSP civilian employees and members of the public at local NSP offices. All proceeds from sales of the

pink NSP patches will benefit local organizations helping cancer fighters.

The link between weight and cancer risk

Managing weight is a challenge for many people in the US. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 70% of American adults are overweight.

This puts them at higher risk for serious conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer. According to research from the American Cancer Society, excess body weight is thought to be responsible for about 8% of all cancers in the United States, as well as about 7% of all cancer deaths.

Researchers have found being overweight or obese is linked with breast cancer in women past menopause, colorectal cancer and cancers of the endometrium, esophagus, kidney and pancreas. And it might be linked with cancers of the gallbladder, liver, cervix and ovary, as well as non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma and aggressive forms of prostate cancer.

Researchers think excess weight may increase the risk of cancer because it can lead to changes in the body that include:

- Immune system function and inflammation;
- Levels of certain hormones, such as

insulin and estrogen;

-Factors that regulate cell growth, such as insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1);

-Proteins that influence how the body uses certain hormones, such as sex hormone-binding globulin.

But the connection between weight and cancer risk is complicated. Studies suggest the risk for some cancer types appears to be increased more for people who were overweight as children or young adults, than those who gained weight later in life. Also, having extra fat in the waist area may raise risk more for some cancer types than having extra fat in the hips and thighs.

Even though gaining weight can raise your cancer risk, it is not clear whether losing weight reduces your risk. But there is growing evidence that weight loss might reduce the risk of breast cancer (after menopause), more aggressive forms of prostate cancer, and possibly other cancers, too.

We do know avoiding weight gain is helpful, whether you are overweight now or not. If you are carrying extra pounds, losing even a small amount of weight has health benefits and is a good place to start.



Why doctors screen for some cancers and not others

Screening means having a test that looks for cancer or another disease in people who do not have any symptoms. Some screening tests can find growths and remove them before they have a chance to turn into cancer. Other screening tests can find cancer early when it is small, has not spread, and might be easier to treat.

The benefits of screening tests should be weighed against any risks of the tests themselves. Risks may include anxiety, pain, bleeding or other side effects. And screening is not perfect. Sometimes screening misses cancer. And sometimes it finds something suspicious that turns out to be harmless (called a false-positive), but still needs to be checked out through additional tests that also carry risks and may cause more stress.

This is why the American Cancer Society uses a formal process to review scientific evidence to create guidelines for cancer screening. The guidelines advise people about what screening tests they should get, when they should get them and how frequently the tests should be done. The higher a person's risk for cancer – due to age, family history or other factors – the more likely the benefits of screening will outweigh

the risks.

American Cancer Society Screening Guidelines:

The American Cancer Society's guidelines for average-risk adults recommend regular screening for breast cancer, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer, based on scientific evidence that shows those screenings may help save lives.

Weighing the benefits and risks of screening for prostate cancer and lung cancer is more complicated because other individual factors are involved. Therefore, we recommend people become informed and talk with their doctor regularly to make the screening decisions that are best for them. For many other cancer types, researchers continue to conduct studies to learn the best ways to find cancer before symptoms appear.

Breast Cancer: Women should have the choice to start yearly screening with a mammogram at age 40 if they wish to do so. All women at average risk of breast cancer should begin yearly screening with a mammogram by age 45. At age 55, women can switch to a mammogram every two years, or can continue yearly screening. Women should talk to a health care provid-

er about their own personal risk for breast cancer and about any breast changes they notice. Regular screening should continue for as long as a woman is in good health and expects to live at least 10 more years.

Cervical Cancer: Women between the ages of 21 and 29 should have a Pap test every three years. Women between the ages of 30 and 65 should have both a Pap test and an HPV test (called co-testing) every five years, or a Pap test alone every three years. Women over age 65 who have had regular screening tests with normal results should no longer be screened for cervical cancer. Some women – because of their history – may need to be screened more often. Talk to a health care provider about your history and risk for cervical cancer.

Colorectal Cancer: Adults at average risk should begin regular colorectal screening at age 45, but those at high risk for colorectal cancer based on family and/or personal history or other factors may need to: start screening before age 45, be screened more often or get specific tests. Several different tests can be used to screen for colorectal cancer, including colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, guaiac-based fecal

occult blood test and more. Talk with a health care provider about your risk for colorectal cancer and which tests might be good for you, and talk to your insurance provider about your coverage. All abnormal results on non-colonoscopy screening tests should be followed up with a colonoscopy.

Lung Cancer: Not all lung cancers can be prevented. Screening is recommended for certain people at higher risk for lung cancer. If you are smoke now or did smoke and quit and you are aged 55 to 74 and in fairly good health, you might benefit from screening for lung cancer with a yearly low-dose CT scan (LDCT). Talk to a health care provider about your risk for lung cancer, how you can quit smoking if you still smoke, the possible benefits, limits and harms of lung cancer screening, and where you can get screened.

Prostate Cancer: The American Cancer Society, along with other leading medical organizations, recommends informed decision-making when it comes to screening for prostate cancer. This means men should discuss the possible risks and benefits of prostate cancer screening with a health care provider before deciding whether to be screened.

Radon by the Numbers



21,000

lung cancer deaths per year

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environmental
cause of any cancer



#1
cause of lung cancer among
people who have never smoked



10x
risk of lung cancer
among people who
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levels are
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www.cdc.gov/radon

Data sources: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Association of Radon Scientists & Technologists

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The truth about alternative medical treatments

Almost 40% of Americans believe cancer can be cured through alternative therapies alone, according to a survey conducted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. This is alarming because evidence shows people who use alternative therapies in place of standard cancer treatments have much higher death rates.

The terms “alternative,” “complementary” and “lifestyle” medicine are used to describe many kinds of products, practices and treatments that are not part of standard or traditional medicine. Alternative therapy refers to non-standard treatment used in place of standard treatment, while complementary therapy usually means methods used along with standard treatment. Lifestyle medicine is a newer field that describes its approach as preventing and treating illness through healthy eating, physical activity and other healthy behaviors without the use of medicine.

In some cases, complementary methods can help cancer patients feel better when used alongside standard treatment and with the advice of a health care provider. Alternative and complementary therapies are often appealing because they use your own body, your own mind or things that may be found in nature. But sometimes these methods wrongly claim to prevent, diagnose or treat cancer even when they have not been proven to work through scientific testing.

And in the worst cases, some alternative or complementary therapies may be dangerous or even deadly. Some may also interfere with how standard cancer treatment works. When thinking about using any non-traditional therapy, it is important to first discuss it with a health care team.

Alternative and complementary therapy can pose dangers:

Some of these therapies promise wellness using a method that sounds simple, wholesome and without harmful side effects. But this is not always true. Some concerns include:

-Delaying surgery, radiation, chemotherapy or other traditional treatment by using an alternative therapy can allow the cancer to grow and spread to other parts of the body.

-Some complementary and alternative therapies have been reported to cause serious problems or even deaths.

-Certain vitamins and minerals can increase the risk of cancer or other illnesses, especially if too much is taken. Some companies do not follow Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules about making claims and labeling supplements properly. In some cases, harmful contaminants can get into dietary supplements because of how they are manufactured or handled.

How complementary medicine

can be helpful and safe:

Some complementary methods have been studied and shown to help people feel better while they are undergoing standard cancer treatment under a doctor’s care. Examples might include meditation to reduce stress, peppermint or ginger tea for nausea, or guided imagery to help relieve stress and pain during medical procedures.

Many complementary treatments are unlikely to cause harm and will not interfere with your cancer treatment. Here are some examples:

-Acupuncture may help with mild pain and some types of nausea.

-Art or music therapy may promote healing and enhance quality of life.

-Biofeedback uses monitoring devices to help people gain conscious control over physical processes that are usually controlled automatically, such as heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, sweating and muscle tension.

-Massage therapy can decrease stress, anxiety, depression and pain and increase alertness, according to some studies.

P-rayer and spirituality help many people with the emotional side effects from cancer.

-Tai chi and yoga have been shown to improve strength and balance in some people.

Warning signs:

When thinking about using any method instead of standard evidence-based medical treatment, it is important to talk to a health care team first. And watch out for these warning signs:

-Be suspicious of any treatment that says it can cure cancer or other difficult-to-treat diseases (such as chronic fatigue, multiple sclerosis, AIDS, etc.). It is important to remember that those claims have not been proven.

-Be suspicious of any treatment that claims to offer benefits with no side effects. Even herbs and vitamins have possible side effects. If the treatment is marketed as having no side effects, it has likely not been studied in rigorous clinical trials, where side effects would be seen.

-Be suspicious of promoters who attack the medical or scientific community or who say not to use standard or traditional medical treatment.

-Beware of treatments available in only one clinic, especially if that clinic is in a country with less strict patient protection laws than those in the United States, the United Kingdom (UK) or the European Union (EU).

-Beware of terms such as “scientific breakthrough,” “miracle cure,” “secret ingredient” or “ancient remedy.”

-Beware of personal stories that claim amazing results but provide no actual scientific evidence.


-Find out about the training and education of anyone supporting the

treatment or using it as a treatment. Find out if they are medical doctors and whether they are experts in cancer care or complementary medicines.

-Find out whether scientific studies or clinical trials have studied this treatment in people (not just animals), and what side effects have been reported. Find out if the treatment could add harm or interact badly with other

medicines or supplements.

-Learn whether the findings have been published in trustworthy journals after being reviewed by other scientists who are experts in the same field, or if they have been promoted only in the mass media, such as books, magazines, the internet, TV, infomercials and radio talk shows.




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Pink Flamingo Nite was held at Our Savior Lutheran Church. (clockwise from top left) Attendees enjoyed a light supper prior to the program. Guests mingled throughout the church, gathering cancer awareness information and stopping at the Photo Booth. Musical entertainment was provided by The Heavenly Hens. Featured speaker this year was Lisa (Walton) Berge, who shared her breast cancer story and what she and her family have gone through.

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Colorectal Cancer screening: What are the options?

Colorectal cancer screening – testing to look for cancer before symptoms start – can help save lives. Regular screening can find colorectal cancer early when it is small and might be easier to treat. There are several different screening options for colorectal cancer. No matter which one you choose, the important thing is to be tested.

The recommended tests fall into 2 categories:

Stool-based tests

Stool-based tests look at the stool (feces) for signs of cancer or pre-cancers. These tests are less invasive and easier to have done. But they usually need to be done more often than other types of tests.

Fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is used to find tiny amounts of blood in the stool. This can be a sign of cancer or large polyps. You take this test at home with a kit you get from the doctor's office. The FIT test needs to be done every year.

Guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) is also used to find hidden blood in the stool. You take this test at home with a kit you get from the doctor's office. The kit will include instructions on how to do the test and return it. If your doctor suggests a gFOBT test, you will may need to avoid some foods (such as red meat) and medicines (such as ibuprofen, aspirin and higher doses of Vitamin C) for several days before the test. The gFOBT test needs to be done every year.

Stool DNA testing looks for certain DNA or gene changes in cells that can get into the stool from polyps (pre-cancerous growths) or cancer cells. It may also check for blood in the stool. For this test, people use a take-home kit to collect a stool sample and mail it to a lab. Cologuard® is the name of the stool DNA test that is currently FDA-approved. This stool test needs to be done every three years.

If any of these tests show abnormal signs of blood or DNA changes, a colonoscopy will need to be done to see if you have cancer. It is important to remember that abnormal results do not necessarily mean that you have cancer because they can be caused by a non-cancerous condition, such as ulcers or hemorrhoids.

Stool-based tests are not the best option for everyone. They are recommended for people who have an average risk for colorectal cancer. If you have a personal history of polyps, colorectal cancer runs in your family, or you have other risk factors, your health care provider may suggest that you have a visual test.

Visual tests

Visual (or structural) tests look inside the colon and rectum for areas that might be cancer or polyps. These tests can be done less often than stool-based tests, but they require more preparation ahead of time, and can have some risks that stool-based tests do not have.

Colonoscopy uses a flexible lighted tube with a small camera on the end to look at the entire length of the colon and rectum. The tube is put in through the anus then into the rectum and colon. If polyps are found, they may be removed during the test.

For a colonoscopy, your colon and rectum must be empty and clean so your doctor can see the entire lining during the test. You might hear this referred to as a "bowel prep." There are different ways to do this, including pills, fluids and enemas (or combinations of these). You will be given medicine to keep you relaxed and sleepy during the test (sedation) so will need a ride home after the test. If you are of average risk and nothing abnormal is found during the test, you will not need another colonoscopy for 10 years.

CT colonography (also called virtual colonoscopy) is a scan of the colon and rectum that provides detailed images of the colon and rectum so the doctor can look for polyps or cancer. It requires bowel prep, but no sedation.

A person will likely have two scans: one while lying on the back and one while on the stomach or side. If something is seen that may need to be biopsied, a follow-up colonoscopy will be needed. CT colonography must be done every five years.

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is not widely used for colorectal cancer screening in the U.S. It is like a colonoscopy but looks at less than half of the colon and rectum. Bowel prep is required before the test, but most people do not need sedation for this test. If polyps or sus-

picious areas are seen, a colonoscopy will be needed to look at the rest of the colon. Flexible sigmoidoscopy must be done every five years.

Talk to your doctor about screening.

Regular screening is one of the most important ways to prevent colorectal cancer. If polyps are found during colorectal cancer testing, they can usually be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening can also help find cancer early, when it is smaller and might be easier to treat. It is important

to get tested as often as recommended.

If you are 45 or older, talk to your doctor about which screening test is right for you. Also check with your insurance company about coverage and what you might have to pay.

And no matter your age, talk to your doctor about your family medical history. People at higher risk for colorectal cancer because of family history or certain health conditions might need to start screening earlier than age 45 or be screened more often.

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Unique ways to reduce cancer risk every day

The human toll cancer takes is significant, both on the lives it claims and on the friends and family of those victims. Estimates from the International Agency for Research on Cancer indicated 10 million individuals across the globe lost their lives to cancer (excluding nonmelanoma skin cancer) in 2020. New research indicates those numbers could be on the rise.

A study published in the journal *The Lancet* in 2020 found deaths

from cancer are now more common in some high- and middle-income countries than deaths from cardiovascular disease. Authors of the study, which examined incidences of cancer among adults between the ages of 35 and 70 in 21 countries across five continents, concluded cancer is like to become the leading cause of death in middle-age.

Though cancer is a formidable disease, many cases of cancer are preventable. In fact, the things people do every

day can go a long way toward lowering their cancer risk by a significant margin. Certain behaviors, like avoiding smoking, are widely known to reduce cancer risk. But some lesser known actions also can help individuals lower their risk.

· **Quit when you hear the click at the gas station.** The Air Pollution Control District of Santa Barbara County in California says gasoline vapors include a variety of toxic substances, including benzene. Benzene is an air pollutant that adversely affects the central nervous system, the respiratory tract and the immune system.

Modern automobiles now click when the gas tank is full and it is vital drivers avoid adding any more gas after they hear that click. Drivers may be accustomed to topping off after the click, but doing so can affect the vapor recovery system in a car. That system is designed to keep toxic chemicals like benzene out of the air. Topping off can needlessly expose drivers and their passengers to benzene, which the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers a carcinogen, or cancer-causing chemical.

· **Grill wisely.** Millions of people anxiously await the return of warm weather so they can once again fire up their backyard grills. Various studies have suggested there's a link between well-done grilled meat and cancer. One study conducted by researchers at Vanderbilt University found that high intake of well-done meat increases exposure to heterocyclic amines (HCAs), a type of carcinogen that forms in cooked red meat. That does not mean individuals should put away their grills, but a change in grilling habits could help lower cancer risk. For example, one study from researchers at Kansas State University found that adding antioxidant-rich spices such as rosemary and thyme to marinade and soaking meat for at least an hour before cooking can reduce HCAs by as much as 87%.

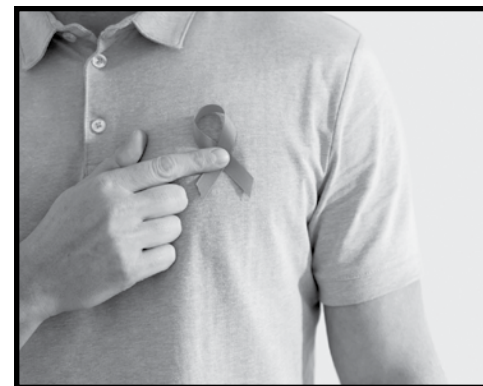
· **Drink more fluids.** Drinking more fluids is one of the easier things people can do every day to reduce their cancer risk. The American Cancer Society recommends individuals consume eight cups of water per day, but millions likely fall far short of that amount.

That is unfortunate, as research presented at the American Association for Cancer Research International Conference on Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research in 2011 found that high fluid intake was associated with a 24% reduced bladder cancer risk among men. In addition, a separate study funded by the Strauss Institute and published in 2020 in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* found that women with breast cancer consumed less water and total fluids than women



who did not have breast cancer. The researchers concluded more investigation into the link between drinking more water and reducing breast cancer risk is necessary, but noted that drinking water is harmless, convenient and beneficial to many aspects of health.

Though cancer could soon become the leading cause of death in various parts of the globe, many of those deaths can be prevented. And even the simplest measures can make a difference in cancer risk.



Discussing risk of breast cancer in men

Breast cancer affects millions of women each year, but breast cancer also can be diagnosed in men. Each year in the United States, about 2,400 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in men, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Macmillan Cancer Support says men have a small amount of breast tissue behind their nipples, where breast cancer potentially can develop. Breast tissue in boys and girls is the same until puberty, when girls start to develop more. Signs of male breast cancer include a lump or swelling in the breast, redness or flaky skin in the breast, irritation or dimpling of the skin around the nipple, nipple discharge or pulling in or pain of the nipple, states the CDC.



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Five Ways to Help Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk

Although there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, there are several things you can do that may lower your likelihood of getting it. This is because certain breast cancer risk factors are related to personal or lifestyle behaviors, such as diet and physical activity. Other lifestyle-related risk factors include decisions about taking medicines that contain hormones.

Here are five ways to help protect your breast health.

1. It is best not to drink alcohol. Women who drink should have no more than one drink a day.

Drinking alcohol is clearly linked to an increased risk of breast cancer. The risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed. Women who have one alcoholic drink a day have a small (about 7% to 10%) increase in risk compared with those who do not drink, while women who have two to three drinks a day have about a 20% higher risk. Alcohol is linked to an increased risk of other types of cancer, too.

2. Get to and stay at a healthy weight.

Being overweight or obese, especially after menopause, increases breast cancer risk and gaining weight as an adult adds to your risk.

After menopause, most of your estrogen comes from fat tissue. Having more fat tissue increases the amount of estrogen your body makes, raising your risk of breast cancer. Also, women who are overweight tend to have higher levels of insulin. Higher insulin levels have also been linked to breast cancer.

If you are already at a healthy weight, do what you can to stay there. If you are carrying extra weight, work with your health care team and try to

lose some. There is some evidence that losing weight may lower breast cancer risk. Losing even a small amount of weight can also have other health benefits and is a good place to start.

3. Be physically active and avoid time spent sitting.

Many studies have found that regular physical activity reduces breast cancer risk.

The American Cancer Society Guideline for Diet and Physical Activity recommends getting at least 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week. Getting to or exceeding 300 minutes is ideal. You can learn more about getting active in *Fitting in Fitness*.

In addition, you should limit sedentary behavior such as sitting, lying down, watching TV and other forms of screen-based entertainment. This is especially important if you spend most of your working day sitting.

4. Follow a healthy eating pattern.

A healthy eating pattern includes a variety of vegetables, fiber-rich legumes (beans and peas), fruits in a variety of colors and whole grains. It is best to avoid or limit red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages, highly processed foods and refined grain products. This will provide you with key nutrients in amounts that help you get to and stay at a healthy weight.

5. Think carefully about using birth control with hormones and hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Some studies show that certain kinds of birth control pills, shots and implantable or topical forms that use hormones might increase breast cancer

risk.

Using HRT with a combination of estrogen and progestin increases the risk of breast cancer. This combination can also lead to increased breast density making it harder to find breast cancer on mammogram. The good news is that within three years of stopping the hormones the risk returns to that of a woman who has not used HRT.

For women who have had a hysterectomy, taking HRT that only includes estrogen may be a better option.

Estrogen alone does not increase breast cancer risk. However, women who still have a uterus are at increased risk of endometrial cancer from estrogen only HRT.

Talk with your doctor about all the options to control your menopause symptoms, including the risks and benefits of each. If you decide to try HRT, it is best to use it at the lowest dose that works for you and for as short a time as possible.



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The link between stress and cancer

Adults have an issue with stress. According to a survey from the American Psychological Association released in December 2022, more than one in four Americans indicated they expected to experience more stress at the start of 2023 than they had at the start of 2022. And it is not just Americans feeling the sting of stress, as the American Institute of Stress indicates 35% of individuals across 143 countries feel stressed out.

Stress is not always a bad thing. Roughly a decade ago, researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, discovered that acute stress in rats caused the stem cells in their brain to grow rapidly into new nerve cells that ultimately improved the animals' mental performance. However, chronic stress, which the APA characterizes as constant and persistent stress over an extended period of time, can have a profoundly negative effect on overall health. And that negative effect includes a link to cancer, especially for survivors of the disease.

A 2020 study from researchers at The Wistar Institute Cancer Center in Philadelphia found that a stress hormone triggered a reaction in immune cells that awakened dormant cancer cells. Those cells eventually formed into tumors.

When discussing the link between stress and cancer, it is important to note that many studies, including the one conducted by researchers at the Wistar Institute, have shown stress and cancer can cause the disease to grow and spread in mice. The National Cancer Institute notes studies have not identified a clear link between stress and cancer outcomes in humans. But researchers urge patience, noting that the Wistar Institute study is a significant step forward in studying the potential link between stress and cancer in humans. Further study in the coming years could very well identify a similar link in humans as the one already discovered in mice.

See LINK, page 8

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OCTOBER IS **National Breast Cancer** AWARENESS MONTH



Warning signs of cancer in pets

Link _____

(continued from page 7)

Few people may think of their pets when pondering a topic as serious as cancer. However, a significant percentage of cats and dogs will develop cancer at some point in their lives. Recognition of that reality on the part of pet owners could potentially save the lives of untold numbers of furry friends.

The National Cancer Institute reports approximately six million dogs and roughly the same number of cats are diagnosed with cancer each year in the United States. In fact, data from the Veterinary Cancer Society indicates cancer is the leading cause of death in pets who are beyond middle age. Much like with humans and cancer, pets have a greater chance of surviving a cancer diagnosis if the disease is detected in its early stages.

Unlike with humans, pets cannot speak up when something is off with their bodies. That means it is the responsibility of pet owners to learn to recognize potential pet cancer warning signs. The nonprofit, New York City-based Animal Medical Center urges pet owners to be on the lookout for the following cancer warning signs and to report anything concerning to a veterinarian immediately.

- **Lumps and bumps:** The AMC encourages pet owners to have any skin mass examined by a veterinarian and to maintain a body map of lumps so new lumps are more easily recognized. The AMC reports that skin masses in cats are more likely to be malignant than those in dogs.

- **Abnormal odors:** Notably bad breath could be caused by a tumor in the mouth. Foul odors also may be a result of bacteria related to an infection or wound related to cancer.

- **Abnormal discharge:** An increased discharge from the pet's nose, eyes or ears could indicate the presence of a tumor or another illness.

- **Wounds that will not heal:** Wounds that will not heal on their own or with prescribed medications could indicate the presence of cancer.

- **Weight loss:** Unexplained weight loss should be brought to the attention of a veterinarian. The AMC urges owners of pets who are overweight to avoid welcoming unexplained weight loss without consulting with a veterinarian. Unless a pet is on a diet, it is unlikely to lose weight.

- **Changes in appetite:** The AMC recommends pet owners monitor how much their pets eat, as an increase or

decrease in appetite could indicate the presence of cancer.

- **Coughing or difficulty breathing:** Changes in a pet's breathing pattern or a reluctance to exercise should be brought to the attention of a veterinarian. Cancer can affect a pet's breathing in a number of ways, so these signs should not be taken lightly.

- **Lethargy and depression:** Lack of interest in daily activities, including walks and play sessions, could indicate the presence of cancer. In addition, cancer can increase the amount of time pets spend sleeping.

- **Changes in bathroom habits:** The AMC notes excessive water consumption, blood in the urine, difficulty urinating or defecating, frequent diarrhea or blood in the stool may indicate the presence of cancer.

- **Pain:** Pain may be linked to various ailments, including cancer. If a pet is limping, have the animal examined by a veterinarian to determine the cause of the limp.

Cancer affects millions of pets each year. Responsible pet owners can learn to spot potential warning signs of cancer to increase the chances their furry friends survive the disease.

In the meantime, individuals are urged to take stress seriously and not simply accept it as a mere fact of twenty-first century life.

And that is especially important for individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer, including those who are in treatment and others who have successfully finished their treatment. According to City of Hope, one of just 52 NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States, talking to others and relying on loved ones when receiving treatment; speaking with someone in a neutral position, such as a therapist and exercising regularly are some of the ways to overcome chronic stress. City of Hope also notes the stress-reducing benefits of wellness practices such as meditation and yoga in regard to combatting stress.

Chronic stress can have a lasting and negative impact on overall health. Though the link between chronic stress and cancer requires more study before researchers can reach a conclusion about such a connection, individuals are urged to embrace the many ways they can reduce chronic stress with a goal of living healthier, happier and, hopefully cancer-free lives.



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