DON’T FORGET YOUR ANIMALS DURING BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mammary tumors in companion animals are preventable and treatable

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month for all members of the family, including your four-legged companion animals.

"Mammary tumors are the most common cancer in unspayed female dogs, and the second most common cancer, after skin tumors, in spayed females," said Dr. Laura Garrett, a veterinary Oncologist who is Board-certified by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM). "Mammary tumors are less common in cats, but do occur and are generally more malignant than the canine ones."

Much like their human counterparts, dogs and cats have many of the same options available to treat and possibly cure mammary cancer, as well as many other types of cancer, including lymphoma and osteosarcoma.

"If caught early, dogs and cats with mammary cancer have a good prognosis," said Dr. Garrett. "Treatment is centered around surgical removal of the tumor, with some cases - including most cats - benefiting from chemotherapy. Unlike in humans, radiation does not generally play a role in the therapy."

The best step in preventing mammary cancer in companion animals is to spay female cats and dogs before their first heat cycle.

"There is a direct and well-documented link between the early spaying of female dogs and the reduction in the incidence in mammary cancer," said Dr. Garrett. “Recent studies have also shown a benefit in early spaying for female cats as well.”

About the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM)
The ACVIM is the national certifying organization for Veterinary Specialists in large and small animal internal medicine, cardiology, neurology, and oncology. The mission of the ACVIM is to enhance animal and human health by advancing veterinary internal medicine through training, education, and discovery. For more information please visit www.ACVIM.org.

Learn how canines with mammary cancer are helping scientists learn more about breast cancer in humans.

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