



HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CANCER

Cancer can be a challenging condition to cure, regardless of the chosen modality for treatment—chemotherapy, radiation, herbs, homeopathy, or Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Each approach has its share of successes as well as failures, and no method is the best method for everyone. The optimal approach must consider the whole patient, including the available support and ability to reduce physical, emotional, and mental stress.

On a basic level, cancer is a disease resulting from a mutation of the normal process of cell growth in the body, replication, differentiation, and maturation. The altered process leads to unregulated cell growth and the formation of a tumor or a mass (Walters, 1993). The conventional medical approach to cancer is to localize the cancerous lesion, surgically eradicate it, irradiate any remaining mutated cells, and destroy any fast-growing cells with chemotherapy (Walters, 1993). This entire process is very suppressive to the immune system.

John Boik, in *Natural Compounds in Cancer Therapy* (2001), identified seven pro-cancer events:

- 1) Induction of genetic instability in the cancer cell.
- 2) Abnormal expression of genes to inhibit or promote growth.
- 3) Abnormal signal transduction—cancer cells are more responsive to external factors that stimulate cell activities, promote cell contact, and adhesion.
- 4) Abnormal cell-to-cell communication; cancer cells act independently of other cells.
- 5) Induction of angiogenesis, the growth of new blood vessels.
- 6) Invasion and metastasis—cancer cells invade normal tissue and spread via blood and lymph to distant locations in the body.
- 7) Immune invasion—cancer cells mask themselves from detection by the immune system.

From a holistic medical perspective, cancer is a disease in which there is uncontrolled, mutated growth, and also a susceptible immune system which is unable to recognize, respond to, and inhibit the uncontrollable cell growth (Diamond, Cowden, Goldberg, 1997). In healthy humans and animals, the immune system does this almost daily. The whole animal must be seen as a being with a particular vital or life force, personality, preferences, and home environment, not just as a cancerous lesion. The holistic approach to cancer, while using nontoxic products, addresses destruction of the mutated cellular growth (the localized lesion), modulation of the immune system susceptibility, and correction of the internal disease process.

Many factors contribute to the genesis of cancer. Some of them include sunlight, chronic electromagnetic field exposure, geopathic stress, sick-building syndrome, ionizing radiation, nuclear radiation, pesticide/herbicide residues, industrial toxins, polluted water, chlorinated water, fluoridated water, and vaccines (Diamond, 1997; Dodds, 1995). Cancer is at one end of a continuum in a breakdown of poor inner/outer communication, chronic irritation, and stress. We strongly recommend not giving vaccinations to, or using any chemicals on, an animal being treated for cancer.

At Holistic Pet Vet Clinic (HPVC) we use a multifaceted approach, striving to address the pro-cancer events, build the patient's immune system, minimize the toxic effects of cancer treatment, and address local lesions. Individual results vary because of the type or stage of cancer being treated as well as the life force of the patient. Our treatments are as aggressive as an individual animal's life force can manage.

DIET

Diet can greatly influence the outcome of any cancer treatment. Unlike healthy cells, cancer cells tend not to use complex molecules such as proteins and Omega-3 fatty acids; instead, they preferentially use simple sugars for their growth. As the cancer cells metabolize the sugars they generate lactic acid. Then the body needs to expend more energy than usual to metabolize this acid, and the animal emaciates or gets "cancer cachexia." Therefore, the proper diet for the cancer patient is low in carbohydrates, and is moderate in fats and high-quality proteins (Ogilvie, 1995).

Whole-food diets are best. Try to discontinue processed, and especially dry food, altogether because of the high grain base and the drying quality of the food. From a TCM perspective, dryness can contribute to the internal disease process. Most commercial foods use poor-quality proteins. Processing the food with high-temperature cooking destroys many essential nutrients and amino acids, such as glutamine, which are important for dealing with cancer. The more processed the food, the more the complex carbohydrates are broken down into simple sugars. It is essential to feed a fresh, whole-food diet to animals with cancer.

Increase proteins to 35%–50%. If the animal's life force and digestive system are strong, feed raw meat. Otherwise, add medium-rare to rare meats.

Decrease carbohydrates to 0%–25%. Use only complex carbohydrates. Eliminate simple sugars. Replace grain in diet with cruciferous vegetables and those high in beta-carotene. Feed cats a grain-free, potato-free diet.

Increase fiber. Add lightly steamed vegetables to the diet. Vegetables are an excellent source of fiber and add important nutritional compounds. This is a healthier way to add fiber than using husks from peanuts or seeds.

Omega-3/Omega-6 fatty acids. Try to get to 250 mg total Omega-3 per 20 lbs of body weight per day. Flax oil (for dogs) and cod liver oil (for cats and dogs) are good sources of Omega-3 fatty acids (essential polyunsaturated fats). These fats are necessary for the function of nearly every cell in the body, particularly cells of the brain, nervous system, eyes, heart, and immune system.

Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts) contain quercetin, indoles, and sulforaphane. Quercetin is a bioflavonoid from fruits and vegetables which acts as an antioxidant and antihistamine, and inhibits abnormal hormone activity. It also inhibits new-growth cancer cell signals and suppresses cancer cell division, and is good for mast cell and mammary cancer. Indoles protect cells from damage by carcinogens and help the liver inactivate estrogen-like compounds that may promote breast cancer. Sulforaphane increases the production of carcinogen-destroying enzymes, and has been shown to prevent cancer in rats. Sulforaphane is a type of isothiocyanate, a substance that may block tumor formation by

jump-starting the body's production of specific liver enzymes, which detoxify carcinogens and help flush them from the body.

Sweet potatoes, carrots, squash, tomatoes, spinach and kale. All are good sources of carotenoids such as beta-carotene. Beta-carotene, when tested alone, has shown little protective activity, but when complexed with other nutrients (i.e., when consumed naturally in foods) it has been shown to help prevent cancer of the larynx, esophagus and lungs. Tomatoes contain a carotenoid called lycopene, which gives them their red color. Lycopene helps fight uncontrolled growth of cells into tumors. Studies have shown that people who eat lots of tomatoes have a reduced risk for cancer of the colon, prostate, bladder, and pancreas.

Just as important as what goes into a diet is what needs to be omitted from the diet. **Avoid foods preserved with Ethoxyquin and BHT** as these chemicals have been shown to promote cancer. Many pet food companies keep costs down by utilizing slaughterhouse waste, legally termed as "animal or meat by-products," in their formulations. These by-products can include moldy, rancid, or spoiled processed meat, beaks, feet, feathers, roadkill, as well as tissues too severely riddled with cancer to be eaten by people. Even euthanized animals have been tracked in pet food. Most of the meat meal fed to animals contains an excess of hormones, which can contribute to the production of cancer. These hormones come from two sources: artificially produced hormones which are fed to food animals to stimulate their growth, and tissues naturally very high in hormones, such as glandular waste and the fetal tissue from pregnant cows that aren't considered fit for human consumption. Pet food is often made more palatable by adding flavor enhancers and coloring agents which are coal-tar derivatives to make the food look appealing. Sodium nitrate has been used as a red coloring agent and a preservative in pet food. When sodium nitrate is used in food it can produce nitrosamine, a powerful carcinogenic substance.