

Canine cancer treatments getting more dog-specific

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FDA expert details what you need to know to help your 'best friend.'

(HealthDay)—Cancer rates in dogs are about the same as in people, but there are far fewer drug treatments specifically targeted for dogs.

"Pets are living longer because of preventative health care. And we're able to diagnose cancers earlier. As a result, there is an increased need for better cancer treatments," Dr. Lisa Troutman, a [veterinarian](#) with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, said in an agency news release.

Until recently, the only drugs available to treat cancer in pets were those approved for use in people. However, some cancer treatments specifically designed for pets have appeared in the past few years.

The FDA has approved three drugs—two of them conditionally—to treat

cancer in dogs. They are Palladia (toceranib phosphate), for the treatment of mast cell tumors; Kinavet-CA1 (masitinib mesylate), also for the treatment of mast cell tumors; and Paccal Vet-CA1 (paclitaxel for injection), used to treat mammary carcinoma and [squamous cell carcinoma](#).

There are no FDA-approved drugs to treat cancer in cats.

Warning signs of cancer in dogs are similar to those in people, including a lump or bump, a wound that doesn't heal, swelling, or [abnormal bleeding](#). Other signs include changes in eating, drinking, peeing, pooping and sleeping.

"Emotional state, such as being withdrawn and irritable, can be another sign," Troutman said.

If your pet is diagnosed with cancer, there are a number of questions you should ask your veterinarian. What treatments are available and what is the likely outcome with each treatment? What are the side effects of the treatments and how will they affect the pet's quality of life? How long does each treatment last and what is the cost? How many return visits to the veterinarian will be needed?

More information: The Veterinary Cancer Society has more about [vets and cancer](#).

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