

© THIS JUST IN

Canine Blood Bank Donors being accepted

Having blood available for trauma, emergencies, and surgeries is an absolute necessity. Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA) originally had its own blood bank using Greyhounds, which shifted to staff-owned dogs some years later, then to canine blood banks throughout the country. With the pandemic, however, available sources haven't been enough, so CUHA is shifting back to an internal system and looking for donors.

All blood collected is specially stored for use at CUHA. Volunteer donor dogs are rewarded with a can of chicken post donation. The ideal dog is 1 to 5 years old and weighs at least 62 lbs. Calm, easy-going dogs are the best as they may end up donating every couple of months. Preferred breeds are Greyhounds, Boxers, Irish Wolfhounds, German Shepherd Dogs, Doberman Pinschers, and pit bulls. Donor dogs are thoroughly screened for health before being admitted to the program.

And there are perks for the selected donor dogs, including a free annual physical exam, free core vaccines, comprehensive bloodwork, a box of treats and dog food at every donation visit, a \$20 credit on their next hospital bill, and a year's worth of heartworm, flea, and tick prevention. CUHA also created a vest for the animals to showcase their role as blood donor. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

African Swine Fever Will Affect Dog Imports.....	2
Cancer Options on the Horizon.....	2
FDA Approves Cancer Drug for Lymphoma.....	2
Deadly Canine Cancer Threat.....	3
Diseased Spinal Discs in Dogs.....	6
Refusal to Eat Prescription Food.....	7
Dogs Can Show Empathy.....	8
Anxious Dog.....	8
Happening Now.....	8

Make Safe Car-Carrier Choices

A loose dog in the car is dangerous to you and the dog

It's a fact: Passengers are more likely to survive a vehicular crash if they are restrained by seat belts. Why, then, do we see dogs free inside a vehicle or, worse, traveling with heads and upper bodies hanging out the window, let alone the poor dogs riding free in the bed of a pickup truck? (And, no, dogs aren't safer in the front seat. Just as with children, the force of an air bag going off can injure or kill your dog.)

An unsecured dog is a danger to himself, the driver, and other passengers. In a crash, your dog becomes a flying object, moving at the speed you were moving at the time of the crash. Getting hit in the back of the head by a 50-pound dog moving at 50 mph is like being hit in the back of the head by a large rock.

And, even if your unrestrained dog does survive a crash, he can escape the vehicle. That terrified dog will likely run and either get hit by oncoming traffic or never be seen again. Our preference is that dogs ride in a crate that is sized for them, appropriately designed, and properly installed.

Fortunately, dog owners are getting wise, as evidenced by the fact that many manufacturers have delayed shipping times due to the number of



The Ruff Land crate gives you the options of where to locate the door(s) and to add ventilation holes, if desired.

orders and, of course, the effects of the global pandemic.

We surveyed popular brands of car crates, talking with dog owners who frequently travel for canine competitions like conformation/breed, obedience, agility, and field work. The brands most frequently mentioned to us were Gunner, MIM Variocage, Ruff Land, and MAD Agility Equipment. Our chart on page 5 offers a comparison of some of the safety crates on the market.

Crash Testing

One of the most important things to investigate is whether the crate is crashworthy, which means will it survive a crash. Unfortunately, there are no government or third-party safety standards that manufacturers of dog travel crates are required to meet nor is there an official third-party product tester. With seat belts, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration sets standards for car manufacturers and the seat belts are tested by the OVSC Compliance Test Laboratories.



A dog-harness-belt combination tie, which is used with car seat belts, effectively secures your dog to the seat but offers no crash protection.

African Swine Fever Will Affect Dog Imports

Unfortunately, they can be a transporter of the disease

You might think that African swine fever (ASF) has nothing to do with dogs. This deadly virus only affects pigs and is not currently in the United States or Canada. If it made its way in, however, it would be highly disrupting to the pork industry. Recently, it has been detected in swine in the Dominican Republic.

While dogs (and people for that matter) do not get or transmit ASF directly, it is possible that it could come in on dogs or on certain ticks that might be on imported dogs, so the U.S. Department of Agriculture is requiring all dogs imported into the United States for resale from a region in which ASF exists, or is reasonably believed to exist, to submit written documentation verifying completion of the requirements, including disposal of animal bedding, microchip identification, and post-entry bath. Dogs “for resale” includes any dogs coming in through rescue groups as well as commercial operations. Countries covered by this edict include the Caribbean and parts of eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Brazil, and India. ■

Cancer Options on the Horizon

Advancements that are FDA-approved for humans

Cheryl London DVM PhD DACVIM, through Vet Girl, recently discussed advances in cancer diagnostics and treatment based on genetics. One exciting development is the use of a “liquid biopsy” for picking up cancers. This technique takes a blood sample collected in special tubes and then analyzes the DNA for mutations that have been associated with certain cancers. It not only shows if cancer is present but also can monitor if a pet has gone into remission or if there is a relapse. Clearly less invasive than a traditional biopsy, this option may give faster lab results.

Currently, liquid biopsies are FDA-approved for some human cancers. Some of those same DNA mutations have been identified in canine cancers. Some of these cancer mutations can provide risk factors for the development of resistance to treatment and likelihood of metastasis as well as evidence of a cancer being present.

Dr. London also mentioned “small molecule inhibitors” as treatments for various cancers. These compounds can be used alone or in combination with chemotherapy or radiation. The medications specifically target certain cell functions, usually tied into a mutation associated with the cancer they are being used for. A veterinary example here is toceranib phosphate (Palladia), which is approved for use in treating mast cell tumors in dogs. Laverdia CA1 (Verdinexor) is another drug of this type that recently received conditional approval from the FDA for treating lymphoma in dogs. These oral treatments can be administered at home.

Dr. Kate Megquier’s research through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Broad Institute found similar mutations in Golden Retrievers for lymphoma and hemangiosarcoma (see p. 3). Knowing about a specific mutation in a dog can help veterinarians devise specific, targeted treatments. ■

FDA Approves Cancer Drug for Lymphoma

The drug was originally conditionally approved

Tanovea (rabacfosadine injection) received full FDA approval to treat lymphoma in dogs. It had been on conditional approval since December 2016.

Lymphoma accounts for 24% of canine cancers and affects dogs as young as 3 years old. Some breeds, such as Golden Retrievers, Boxers, Bullmastiffs, Basset Hounds, Saint Bernards, Scottish Terriers, Airedale Terriers, and Bulldogs, may have a genetic predisposition. Pulmonary fibrosis is a side effect, so this medication is not recommended for West Highland White Terriers, a breed prone to that condition. ■



Naddiya | iStock photo

Cornell DogWatch

EDITOR IN CHIEF

William H. Miller, VMD, Dipl ACVD,
Emeritus, Professor, Clinical Sciences

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Cynthia Foley

TECHNICAL EDITOR

Debra M. Eldredge, DVM

ADVISORY BOARD

James A. Flanders, DVM, Dipl ACVS, Emeritus,
Associate Professor, Clinical Sciences

Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., Dipl ACVB,
Emeritus, Professor of Behavior Medicine

Joseph Wakshlag, MS, DVM, Ph.D., Dipl ACVN,
Associate Professor, Clinical Nutrition

Kelly R. Hume, DVM, DACVIM
Associate Professor, Clinical Sciences,
Oncology

Meredith L. Miller, DVM, Dip ACVIM
Associate Clinical Professor, Small Animal Medicine

Leni K. Kaplan, MS, DVM
Senior Lecturer, Community Practice Service

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Eileen Fatcher, DVM
Katherine Basedow, LVT

DogWatch is an independent newsletter produced in collaboration with Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine



Cornell Veterinary Medicine

For information on pet health, visit the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, website at vet.cornell.edu

Send questions and letters to the editor:

DogWatch
535 Connecticut Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06854-1713
dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu

Subscriptions: \$39 per year (U.S.) • \$49 per year (Canada). For subscription and customer service information, visit www.dogwatchnewsletter.com/cs or write to: DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535. 800-829-5574



Belvoir

DogWatch* (ISSN: 1098-2639) is published monthly for \$39 per year by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1713. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Chief Content Officer; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Chief Marketing Officer; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Chief Circulation Officer. ©2021 Belvoir Media Group, LLC.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535.

Express written permission is required to reproduce, in any manner, the contents of this issue, either in full or in part. For more information: Permissions, DogWatch, 535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, Connecticut 06854-1713.

Deadly Canine Cancer Threat

Hemangiosarcoma accounts for 30% of dog cancers

One of the most dreaded canine cancers is hemangiosarcoma, which is cancer of the blood vessels. It often strikes without warning, with families waking up to find their dog curled up on his bed, dead. It is insidious in its spread throughout a dog's body and seems to have a genetic predilection for some dog breeds such as Golden Retrievers and German Shepherd Dogs. The lifetime risk for a Golden Retriever to develop hemangiosarcoma is estimated at 20%, and a whopping 30% of all canine cancers are hemangiosarcoma.

While hemangiosarcoma can occur anywhere in the dog's body there are blood vessels, the prime areas of concern are the atrium of the heart and the spleen. Both areas are prone to spontaneous rupture, which can easily lead to metastasis of the cancer or death from extensive internal hemorrhage.

Survival times from diagnosis range from one to three months. If you add in surgery and chemotherapy, you may get about six months good quality time. Sadly, about 90% of all dogs diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma are dead within a year of their initial diagnosis.

For most, though, the first clinical sign of hemangiosarcoma is sudden death: The tumor ruptures, and the dog bleeds out. Minor bleed outs may be noticed by a dog who is suddenly lethargic, has pale gums, might have difficulty breathing or show heavy panting despite low temperatures and no exercise, or may suddenly have a distended abdomen. If a minor bleed seals or clots over, your dog may appear to bounce back for a while.

Fighting Back

How can this cancer be fought? One way is to identify genes that may cause or contribute to the development of this neoplasm. Once identified, ways to intervene may be possible. Hemangiosarcoma is a serious tumor in human medicine as well, called angiosarcoma (veterinary pathologists are using the terms angioma and angiosarcoma), so research for dogs can often lead to human breakthroughs and vice versa. In addition, treatments that can stop or slow the growth of hemangiosarcoma may help with a wide range of other neoplasms. All



The Morris Animal Foundation Golden Retriever Lifetime Study helps fund research.

cancers depend on blood-vessel growth to provide nutrients and help them to metastasize and grow in place. If angiogenesis (the growth of new blood vessels) can be interfered with, it could stop other cancers as well.

A recent collaboration between the Baker Institute of Animal Health at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and researchers in Japan identified two molecules that are highly associated with hemangiosarcoma cancer cells in the matrix outside the cells. Podoplanin (PDPN) and laminin alpha 4 (LAMA4) are factors that seemed to be limited to the tumor cells. Identifying specific tumor-related factors increases the chances of finding some counter treatment to block those factors and stop cancer growth (Mukai et al, BMC Veterinary Research 2020 16:206).

Treatment

Standard medical treatment has consisted of surgery to remove the spleen, followed by chemotherapy with doxorubicin. (If the cancer is on the heart, there is little to do other than open the pericardial sac to remove pressure on the heart from any bleeding.)

Cheryl Balkman, DVM, DACVIM senior lecturer, section of oncology, at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, is running a trial

on dogs who have had a splenic tumor confirmed as hemangiosarcoma and removed surgically. Her team is adding the oral drug temozolomide to the doxorubicin regimen to see if long-term survival, which is generally poor, can be improved. Temozolomide interferes with normal cell cycles and leads to faster cell death.

Because Golden Retrievers are at high risk for hemangiosarcoma, the Morris Animal Foundation Golden Retriever Lifetime Study has devoted resources to defeating this cancer. Among the studies they have supported are a collaboration study at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center, Purdue University, and University of Pennsylvania. In this study, propranolol, a beta-blocker drug used to treat various heart conditions, has been shown to kill hemangiosarcoma cells in a laboratory setting. It helps people with angiosarcoma by slowing disease progression and improving survival.

At the University of Minnesota, the drug eBAT shows promise in attacking both hemangiosarcoma tumor cells and their vascular support system. So far, minimal side effects have been noted which makes it very promising for people and dogs in the future.

This is part of "Project Shine On," a full-out war on hemangiosarcoma at University of Minnesota, which has developed and refined a blood test to diagnose hemangiosarcoma, including whether the disease has returned and, possibly, a way to intervene in otherwise healthy dogs, using the drug eBAT to kill the cells and make the environment inhospitable to tumor growth. The study is ongoing, with funding provided by the Boxer, Portuguese Water Dog, and Golden Retriever Foundations.

Bottom Line

Hemangiosarcoma remains a serious threat, but it is encouraging to know that many institutions are working to battle this cancer, both to hopefully prevent it and to provide better treatment for cases that do develop.

Most clinical trials require dogs be treated at the universities conducting the research, which is Cornell University and University of Minnesota. However, oncologists in private practice also do trials, which means it could be easier for you to have your dog enrolled. Discuss this option with your own veterinarian to see who might be available in your area. ■

Car-Carrier Choices ... (continued from page 1)

When shopping for a dog crate, this lack of official standards means that a company can state their crates are crash-tested, but it doesn't necessarily mean the testing was adequate nor that the crates are truly safe. At the same time, just because a crate isn't crash tested, doesn't necessarily mean it isn't safe.

"We are learning as we go," says Mark Dreese of MAD Agility Equipment who makes steel custom crates. Like other crate manufacturers, Dreese uses the feedback from customers who've been in accidents to continuously improve his safety crates.

For example, he decreased the size of the doors in his crates to increase the crate's ability to withstand crash forces. Indeed, this is an argument against crates with two doors. Multiple doors may decrease a crate's crashworthiness. On the other hand, two doors in the event of a crash could be a blessing to get the dog out of the crate.

The Center for Pet Safety (CPS), established in 2011, is an independent non-profit pet-safety research-and-advocacy organization. They began a crash-test certification program in 2014. Manufacturers pay examination fees to have their products tested in the

CPS's National Highway Traffic Safety Association contracted test laboratory. If the crates (and tie downs) pass the tests, the product may become CPS-certified. CPS uses a crash-test dummy dog in its testing (in crashes at 30 miles per hour, according to the website). CPS does not list which crate is "best" but that the tested crates passed.

We questioned, however, why the crates listed by CPS as certified date back to 2015 and why we aren't seeing 2020 or 2021 certified crates. "We are actively testing in the background," says founder Lindsey Wolko.

"We work to develop a constructive dialogue between us and the manufacturer. We discuss the test results with the brands, provide them with feedback, and they can go back to the drawing board and resubmit the product to us once issues are corrected," she says.

Wolko said that they maintain a certification contract with manufacturers who have achieved certification. The approved crates must continue to be produced according to the standards that were used to achieve the certification—and CPS checks that. She expects more crates to achieve certification later this year or in early 2022.



For dogs who aren't properly crate trained, the VarioGate system (top photo) adds a layer of crash-tested protection for your dog and protects you from your dog becoming a dangerous flying object during a crash. The VarioCage (bottom) also offers a very airy look that may suit non-crate-loving dogs.

A Real Crash Test

In 2020, with three dogs inside, Rebecca Letson's car was T-boned by an out-of-control vehicle. Rebecca's car spun and was hit repeatedly across four lanes of traffic until finally crashing into a guardrail. Rebecca suffered severe injuries. Her dog in the metal travel crate (top photo) remained contained without injuries, even though the cage was bent. Her other two dogs suffered injuries when the dividing wall of the crate they were sharing was shattered (bottom photo).

Letson, a respected local dog trainer and owner of Rebecca's Canine Academy (RCA), in Endicott, N.Y., shares this advice: "After firsthand experience, I urge all dog owners to travel with your dogs in crates that are designed to protect your dog in a crash. There is an advantage to crates that can be customized with an escape hatch or two doors to allow access to your dogs in an emergency. I experienced in the crash both the added injuries of a crate that destructed and caused injury to two of my dogs as well as a crate that held strong and protected the third dog."



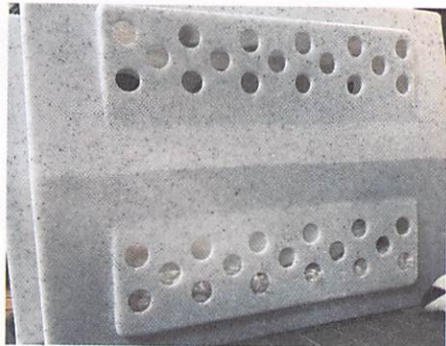
Crashworthy Criteria

You need to be skeptical when talking to a company about their crate's ability to withstand a crash. Ask for details:

- ▶ Are the crates crash tested? If so, how and by what company?
- ▶ What tests were performed? Wolko said that the most important test is the front-impact test. You may hear also about rear collision, side collision, and rollover testing (typically performed with a "drop test," which tries to simulate the impacts in a rollover accident).
- ▶ How did the tie downs perform in the crash testing? Tie downs are essential, says Wolko. CPS requires that brands specify strength-rated anchor straps.

How the crate is secured in the vehicle matters. Some tie downs are made to give a little to absorb some of the crash energy, but they must be strong enough not to break during a crash. Some are secured via seat-belt connectors. Some need to be anchored. These are important details to investigate to see how they will fit in your vehicle.

As tempting as it may be, avoid getting a crate that's oversized for your dog, because, with enough space, in a crash he can be thrown against the crate



Adding ventilation holes may be worth the additional cost. This Ruff Land crate came standard with holes at the top only.



Some manufacturers, like Mad Agility, give you custom-crate options.

walls. And crumple zones may not offer as much protection as you think. “Our engineers assessed crumple zones in 2015, and we are not convinced they add much benefit,” says Wolko.

Future Innovations

We found many safety crates on the market with amazing designs to keep our dogs safe. Establishing and maintaining safety guidelines are integral parts of life in the 21st century. They effect

seat belts, automobile crumple zones, air bags, speed limits, and child car seats, which means safety devices are constantly evolving. Waiting for the next big thing might be too late for your dog. Use your crate every time you take your dog somewhere. Accidents happen close to home, too, and dogs are precious cargo. ■

What You Need to Know

Considerations for choosing the crate that is right for you

- ▶ Look at the ventilation in the crate for your dog’s comfort and safety.
- ▶ Measure your dog and check the inside measurements of the crate, which matters to your dog.
- ▶ Decide before you buy where you plan to put the crate in your vehicle and if it will fit comfortably.
- ▶ Determine if the size of the crate in the spot you picked will block the driver’s view.
- ▶ Think about the benefits of a reversible door.
- ▶ Consider whether you can maneuver the crate.
- ▶ Plan ahead. Custom crates are great but may not fit your next vehicle.

Car Travel Crates With Features for Added Pet Dog Safety

Manufacturer	Price starts (size, features add to cost)	Portable/Custom	Material	Comments
Dakota 283 Dakota283.com 886-595-4332	\$409	Portable	Plastic molded one-piece construction	Uses military experience to design crate for tailgate adventures.
Gunner Gunner.com 844-486-6375	\$488	Portable	Double-wall rotomolded plastic construction, which gives twice the protection	Has 5-star crash test certification from Center for Pet Safety.
Impact Dog Crates Impactdogcrates.com 208-908-0118	\$449	Portable	Military-grade aluminum	Can customize whether the door opens to the left or to the right.
Lucky Kennel Luckyduck.com 715-338-3183	\$499	Portable	Rotomolded plastic	Has 5-star crash test certification from Center for Pet Safety.
MAD Agility Equipment Madagility.com 717-543-5693	Varies	Custom	Welded steel	Quiet ride without crate rattling.
MIM Variocage mimvariocage.com 845-853-7711	\$459	Portable or custom	ASTM A366 steel	Crash testing at RISE Research Institute of Sweden; designed by automotive crash-test engineers
Orion Kennels Jacksonadventures.com 931-738-4600	\$274	Portable	Rotomolded plastic	Features climbing rope system for added portability
Ruff Land Kennels Rufflandkennels.com 605-368-9872	\$147	Portable	Rotomolded plastic	Customize doors, placement, and vent holes
TNC Crates Tnccrates.com 612-756-3290	\$480	Portable or custom	Powder-coated aluminum	Completely built on customer specifications

Diseased Spinal Discs in Dogs

This painful condition may require surgery

Just as in your spine, the vertebrae in your dog's back have cartilaginous discs between them to prevent them from touching each other (bone-on-bone contact hurts). The spinal cord runs through holes in the center of the vertebrae and above the intervertebral discs, safely protected from harm.

But intervertebral discs can degenerate or be damaged. If the firm outer part of the disc breaks down, the softer inner part can spill out and touch the spinal cord. Because there is limited space in a tunnel of bone, the spinal cord can become pinched, resulting in pain and/or neurological issues.

"It's such a common problem," says Jonathan H. Wood VMD, Dip. ACVIM, assistant clinical professor of neurology and neurosurgery at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, but a couple treatment options can be pursued, depending on the symptoms.

What You See

"For many animals the first and sometimes only sign is pain, reluctance to move their head or neck, or standing hunched and crying when picked up," says Dr. Wood. "Other animals may have trouble walking where their feet slide out, they walk on top of their feet, or trip and fall frequently. In severe cases, they may not be able to move their legs at all."

IVDD vs IVDH

Dr. Wood defines the two primary stages of a diseased spinal disc:

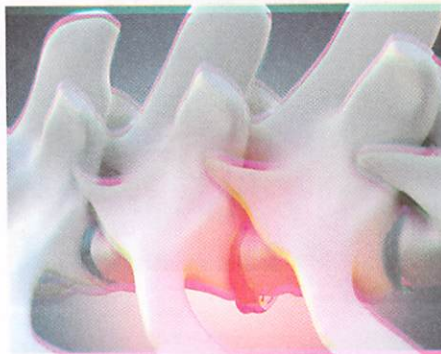
IVDD: Intervertebral Disc Disease.

The pathology of discs drying out and becoming less functional and more likely to herniate or slip.

IVDH: Intervertebral Disc Herniation.

The actual cause of compression to the spinal cord that causes the clinical signs or symptoms.

"Often in veterinary medicine, we use these two terms/abbreviations interchangeably," says Dr. Wood. But, really, IVDD is when your dog has intervertebral discs that could become a problem, and IVDH is when one or more discs are causing problems.



If an intervertebral disc is damaged, the inner part can spill out and touch the spinal cord, causing pain.

Depending on where the problem is and how the disc presses against the spinal cord, only one leg may be affected, or the dog might walk fine but have neck pain. Imagine your dog as a puppet, and the strings that work the legs are the spinal cord: If you get the strings tangled, the puppet won't move properly anymore. "Sometimes pain and reluctance slowly progress to trouble walking and then not walking at all over days or weeks, otherwise, sadly, dogs that were a little off in the morning are not able to move by the afternoon. There is a lot of variation, and we can't predict well each time which patient is going to be a slow progression or a quick one," says Dr. Wood.

"If the pet seems uncomfortable, is standing funny, or you hear toenails dragging or scuffing as they walk, those are good clues that there is a problem with the spinal-cord function and that they should at least contact a vet right away," he says.

Getting a Diagnosis

Pain or neurological symptoms alone aren't enough to make a diagnosis of disc disease. Other conditions that can have the same symptoms include soft tissue injury, infections, autoimmune problems, and even cancer. Your veterinarian will start with a physical exam, detailed history from you, and bloodwork to start ruling out other causes, and then will likely take some x-rays.

"We can't diagnose disc issues just on x-ray," says Dr. Wood. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is the diagnostic tool of choice, especially for patients with severe symptoms or who

have mild symptoms that don't respond to treatment, it is offered at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA).

Choosing a Treatment Plan

The two main treatment options are medical and surgical. Medical management is the conservative choice and often the most attractive initially. "Here the clinician chooses a variety of medications that usually include an anti-inflammatory, one or more pain medications, and strict bed rest, where the patient is not allowed to run, jump, or play outside of its crate or small room for four to six weeks while healing occurs," says Dr. Wood.

"The other option is surgical management, where we go in and remove the compressive disk material that is pushing up on the spine. After surgery, they are usually in the hospital for a few days, and then go home with similar medications, and for the same amount of cage rest," says Dr. Wood.

Your dog's condition will likely make the treatment plan decision. "In general, here in CUHA Neurosurgery we like to move to surgery sooner since that has a potentially better outcome, and also a lower rate of future problems," says Dr. Wood. For example, once a herniated disc has been addressed with surgery, it is unlikely to cause trouble again.

"When patients are still walking, medical and surgical outcomes favor a benefit to surgery, but medical management still has good outcomes. As patients get more severe signs, then the benefit of surgery over just medication grows," says Dr. Wood.

If your dog is showing severe symptoms, such as inability to move one or more legs, moving quickly is essential. Surgery performed within 24 hours of loss of deep pain sensation in the leg has a 90 percent success rate with the dogs getting back to normal mobility and activity after recovery. The longer the dog has lost feeling, the worse the prognosis. Dogs who have had chronic long-term signs may also have a limited or more guarded prognosis.

Many owners of dogs with mild symptoms choose to try medical management first. This is a good time to do a little research into surgical options near you. If your dog does well and improves with medication and rest, no harm done, but if he does rapidly deteriorate you will be prepared with a plan to pursue surgery quickly. ■

Refusal to Eat Prescription Food

Veterinary diets work, but they may lack palatability

Chronic diseases such as kidney disease, diabetes, skin issues, and urinary stones may be managed through prescription dog foods. Why do you need a prescription for these foods? Because these foods are made to combat a specific illness, and nutrition can be a powerful “medicine.”

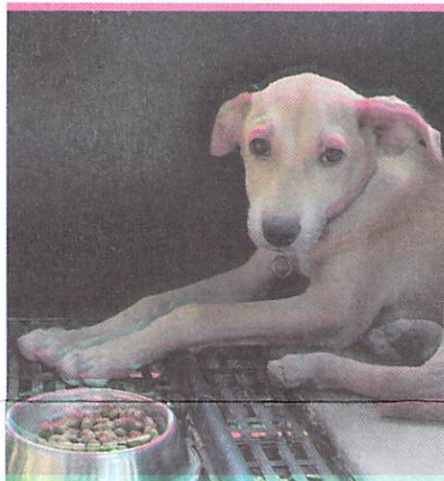
That said, they rarely contain ingredients nutrition-savvy owners might consider the best ingredients. And they are expensive. But—and this is what matters most—they can help you get control of a chronic illness. So, they're worth a good old college try.

Once you get over the sticker shock, your next obstacle is often your dog, who might look at the food, then you, with a clear message of, “I’m not eating this stuff.” And he would have a point. These ingredients are not always tasty. But don’t give up right away. We have ways to get your dog to eat.

1 Switch brands. Years ago, choices were limited, but today several manufacturers make acceptable prescription formulas, and most offer a moneyback guarantee. If your veterinarian only carries one brand, and your dog says yuck, return it to the clinic or manufacturer and request a prescription from your veterinarian for another brand of that prescription diet. Many online retailers carry prescription foods, often in a bigger variety than your local veterinary clinic.

Plus, if, for example, your diabetic dog is struggling with weight loss, there might be multiple prescription formulas that fit your dog’s needs. Even if two prescription diet types have the same flavor, one formulation may be more appealing to your dog than the other (such as Hill’s w/d, r/d, or Metabolic).

2 Try canned. We’re pretty hard-wired into choosing kibble but, for most picky eaters, canned food is more palatable due to the stronger odor and meatier flavor. “Many prescription canned foods come in multiple textures, with both a smooth pate and a chunkier stew with bits of meat and vegetables in gravy,” says Kate Basedow, a licensed veterinary technician (Cornell 2013). Some dogs greatly prefer one texture over the other.



A dog who refuses to eat his prescription diet can be a concern.

Wet foods are especially beneficial for dogs with kidney disease, urinary issues, or dogs with a tendency to become constipated on dry food.

“The downside to canned food is that the increased water content makes it less calorie-dense, meaning that large dogs need a lot of it,” says Basedow. Some dogs might need as much as five 12-ounce cans a day to meet their calorie needs. You can offset the increased cost by mixing canned and dry prescription food – using the dry food for the calories and the canned food for increased palatability.

3 Flavors. In many prescription diets, you have at least two choices in flavors, such as chicken or lamb. We don’t need to tell you to try the other. But, you may not realize that the chicken dry and the chicken wet may taste just different enough that your dog says OK to one of them. If needed, you can always add water to soften the kibble, if he needs canned but won’t eat it.

4 Add water and heat it up. “To increase the natural aroma of the food and tempt your dog to eat, add some water and let it soak in. Hot or warm water is even better, or you can pop the moistened kibbles in the microwave for a few seconds to warm it up and bring out the scent even more,” says Basedow.

Canned food can also be warmed up in the microwave or mixed with some extra water for increased scent. Test the

food with your finger to make sure it isn’t too hot for your dog’s delicate tongue.

5 Make mealtimes fun. Our dogs love to work with us, and melding mealtime with playtime or training time can make you dog more enthusiastic about eating. “Working for their food increases its value,” says Basedow. “If you act like the prescription food is something special that your dog has to earn, he will be more interested and get into it. Start by asking him to sit or do an easy trick, make a big deal of praising him and offer a single kibble as a reward. Do this a couple times, then start increasing the amount of kibbles each time. Often once they have eaten a couple mouthfuls, their appetite is stimulated and they will then finish the bowl.” For canned food, you can offer a little bit of food on a spoon as the reward.

Puzzle toys are another option that some dogs love. Food that is hidden in a funky contraption must be tasty, right? Pour kibble into a rolling ball or stuff a hollow toy with canned food and let the games begin.

If none of these options work, ask your veterinarian to help you formulate a homecooked diet for your dog or recommend a veterinary nutritionist who can do that. In addition, your veterinarian may prescribe an appetite stimulant like capromorelin oral solution (Entyce) to trigger your dog’s appetite. These medications are intended for short-term use but can be very effective for jump-starting your dog’s recovery. ■

A Word to Our Readers:

DogWatch Mailing List Policy

Like many other publishers, we make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe you may enjoy. Indeed, in all likelihood, we were able to first reach you only because another company graciously permitted us access to its customer list. If, when we make our list available, you do not wish to receive these offers and/or information, please let us know by contacting us at: DogWatch Opt-Out Program, PO Box 5656, Norwalk, CT 06856-5656. Please include your mailing label.

Dogs Can Show Empathy

Owner's upcoming surgery has dog off of his routine

Q My 1-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback hasn't been the same for about two weeks. My best guess is that since I learned I needed surgery (two weeks ago), which I have since had (four days ago), he felt the stress and changes that come with that, such as no visits to the dog park, having longer visits at his aunt's home (with his best friend in life) while I was in the hospital, and not being allowed to sleep in my room with me so I don't trip. He has been given extra attention, but he seems depressed. He didn't even get up right away when I put his favorite treat (roasted chicken) in his bowl. Don't get me wrong, he still has a healthy appetite. There are times when he doesn't display this sad behavior, but he does often. And he whines more. How do I help him as he'll have a new daily routine till I heal? I can't take him to the park, because, he is 100 lbs., and I have stitches. But he does get to wrestle with my sister's dog and he has a dog walker that comes by three times a week. Thank you for any advice.

A One of my clients described her dog by saying he laughs when I laugh and cries when I cry. It sounds as if your dog is a similar pet. How lucky you are. Dogs do seem to have empathy with their owners. When owners cried, the dogs would approach with ears and tail down and, if a stranger cried, the dog would approach, sniff, and nuzzle them. Many women have told me that their dog acted different when they are pregnant. I am trying to get enough nerve (and human subjects permission from Cornell) to approach women in a OB-GYN clinic and ask if they have a dog, does the dog act differently now that they are pregnant. I suspect the dog is changing his behavior to the mother-to-be because the father-to-be is treating the wife differently, as in, "Let me carry



The Rhodesian Ridgeback is a beautiful, athletic, courageous dog who is loyal and protective of family.

that for you," or "I'll do the dishes while you rest," and so on.

In your case, the event (surgery) is not such a joyful one, but I hope it is curative, and you will soon be back to normal. To help your dog through the convalescence, you have already arranged for dog walkers and day care, which is great. Enriching his environment is very important. Be sure to have food-dispensing toys for him to obtain at least half of his calories. But don't trip over them! Try to teach him new commands. It would be great if you could teach him to fetch a bottle of water from the refrigerator, but you may have to be content with a paw shake. One trick that would help you is to teach him to sit right in front of you, but facing away from you, so you can use his 100 pounds to pull you up by his harness.

Anxious Dog *Heavy rain terror*

Q Do you have any recommendations to help with anxiety in a dog? Our Golden Doodle has always had issues, but they seem to be getting worse as she ages. She is 7 now. Whenever it even rains heavy, she pants and hides in a dark room. I don't want to depend only on reviews online because I'm not sure the reviewers are unaffiliated with the products. Thanks in advance for any suggestions you can provide.

A You are wise to be skeptical of reviews online. If I believed them, I would look 20 years younger and be dating a handsome millionaire! The person to ask is not Dr. Google but your veterinarian. Many fears become exaggerated as a dog ages, to the point where I call it "Fear of Death Syndrome."

Two things are probably happening: 1) As she ages, she has more and more chances for something really frightening to happen during a storm: a tree falls next to the house or a strong wind bangs the shutters against the house; 2) She is becoming older and the signs of canine cognitive dysfunction (doggie Alzheimer's) may begin to be seen, although she is fairly young.

You should have her thoroughly examined, including a chemistry screen, thyroid panel, and complete blood count because if she feels "off," she will be more anxious. If she is sick, her anxieties should lesson with treatment. If she receives a clean bill of health, your veterinarian can prescribe medications.

She certainly needs a situational drug that you can give her whenever a storm is forecast. It is better to waste a pill or two if a storm does not materialize than for her to be so scared. She may also need a daily medication to relieve her anxieties. Some of the gadgets such as body wraps and pheromones help some dogs so you can try them; they won't harm your dog (only your pocketbook). ■

© HAPPENING NOW ...

Right-Paw Dominance—A study of show dogs by canine genetic testing company Embark found right-paw dominance in more than 60% of dogs, which tracks with other studies that have shown right-paw dominance in 58% of all dogs. Paw dominance was not associated with athletic superiority, but they found an association between breed and pawedness (Animal Health Smart Briefs). ■

Coming Up ...

- ▶ Pancreatic Insufficiency in Dogs
- ▶ Effective Weight-Loss Help
- ▶ Diabetic Dog Therapies and Prognosis
- ▶ Should I Get a TENS Unit of My Own?



Do You Have a Behavior Concern?

Send your behavior questions to Cornell's renowned behavior expert Katherine Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., shown here with Yuki, her West Highland White Terrier. Email to dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu or send by regular mail to DogWatch, 535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1713.



Scan this code for more information on Cornell Canine Health Center.