

Supplements for Use in Veterinary Cancer Patients

After their pet is diagnosed with cancer, many families are interested in incorporating supplements into their pet's treatment protocol to help to improve quality of life, to reduce or prevent side effects from treatment, and/or to prolong their pet's survival. There are hundreds of supplements marketed for veterinary cancer patients, but for many there is limited or no research on safety or effectiveness. Therefore, it can be hard to know which products may be useful for your pet.

The board-certified veterinary oncologists at MedVet Cincinnati have created this guide to provide more information about the supplements we frequently recommend and believe are safe and beneficial for pets with cancer.

Probiotics

Probiotics are a source of healthy bacteria that can improve digestion. They can be useful in pets that develop soft stools or diarrhea secondary to antibiotics or chemotherapy. We recommend a product called Visbiome, as it contains the highest quantity of healthy bacteria as compared to other probiotic products.

Vitamins and Iron

Pets with cancer can develop anemia (low red blood cell count) for a variety of reasons, and this is a common bloodwork abnormality. In patients with significant or progressive anemia, we may recommend Amino B Plex, a supplement containing B vitamins (B1, B2, B6, and B12) as well as iron. This helps to support red blood cell production to improve anemia in pets with cancer.

Pain Control

Fortunately, there are many pain medications available for pets with cancer, including both prescription medications and supplements. We will typically recommend a combination of pain medications to ensure that we are targeting all possible sources of discomfort. Traumeel (also known as T-Relief) is a homeopathic supplement containing Arnica and Echinacea. It can be safely combined with other prescription pain medications to provide additional pain control.

Liver Support

Proper liver function is important for healthy metabolism of foods and medications. In addition, some chemotherapy drugs can cause side effects on the liver. To support a healthy liver, we may recommend a supplement called Denamarin that includes antioxidants and milk thistle.

Management of Bleeding Tumors

For pets with tumors that develop occasional or frequent bleeding (nasal tumors, hemangiosarcoma, or urinary tract tumors), an herbal supplement called Yunnan Baiyao has been shown to reduce bleeding, and for some tumors (hemangiosarcoma), it may also have direct anti-cancer effects.

For more information about cancer staging for dogs and cats, contact MedVet Cincinnati directly at 513.561.0069 or visit medvet.com.

Recommended Dosing Guide for Supplements

Visbiome Capsules/Packets

Can open capsules and sprinkle on food

- Cats and Dogs <20 lbs – 1 capsule or ¼ packet once daily
- Dogs 20-60 lbs – 2 capsules or ½ packet once daily
- Dogs >60 lbs – 4 capsules or 1 packet once daily

Amino B Plex

- Cats and Dogs <5 lbs – 0.5mL orally twice daily
- Cats and Dogs 5-20 lbs – 1mL orally twice daily
- Dogs >25 lbs – 2mL orally twice daily

Traumeel/T-Relief

- Cats – ¼ to ½ tablet orally once to twice daily
- Dogs <15 lbs – ¼ tablet orally once to twice daily
- Dogs 16-50 lbs – ½ tablet orally once to twice daily
- Dogs >50 lbs – 1 tablet orally once to twice daily

Denamarin

- Cat and Dogs <12 lbs – Denamarin for Cats and Small Dogs (see guide on box)
- Dogs 13-34 lbs – Denamarin for Medium Dogs (see guide on box)
- Dogs >35 lbs – Denamarin for Large Dogs (see guide on box)

Yunnan Baiyao

- Dogs <30 lbs – 1 capsule orally once daily
- Dogs 30-60 lbs – 1 capsule orally twice daily
- Dogs >60lbs – 2 capsules orally twice daily

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