

Zika virus is unlikely to pose risk to pets (WTVJ-TV Miami) 8/26

While research on the Zika virus is ongoing, current knowledge suggests that only humans and non-human primates are capable of carrying the Zika virus. Illnesses associated with the Zika virus have not been seen in cats and dogs nor is the virus expected to cause problems. Pets' bodies do not provide an environment for the virus to survive and therefore pets do not appear to be involved in the spread of the Zika virus. No evidence of Zika-linked microencephaly has been found in baby animals. At this time, Zika testing for pets is not offered by any veterinary diagnostic lab.

Comment: Much is still not known about the Zika virus and research is continuing but it appears that our pets cannot be affected by this disease or aid in its spread. SEM

Dog study synchronizes cancer treatment with immune activity (Daily News (New York)) 8/29

A clinical trial synchronizing chemotherapy administration given when a dog's immunity is strongest has eliminated or slowed cancer in some participating dogs. Working with an Australian research team, Biotempus Limited, the researchers discovered that dogs' immune systems run in cycles. By monitoring blood work daily for a few weeks, the timing of a dog's peak immunity is paired with administering the chemotherapy. Using this strategy the immune system is triggered to more effectively fight the cancer. Unfortunately the protocol does not work for all and researchers are still trying to understand why some dogs respond and some don't. This type of protocol is being looked at for use in human cancer treatment as well.

Comment: Synchronizing chemotherapy with peak immunity makes sense. Hopefully further refinement of the protocol will make it more effective for more dogs. SEM

Imaging study shows dogs speak your language (The Washington Post (tiered subscription model), Time.com) 8/30

New MRI imaging studies revealed that dogs process language using the same regions of the brains as humans do. Dogs process familiar words regardless of intonation in the left hemisphere while tone, or intonation, is analyzed in the auditory regions of the right hemisphere. The imaging also showed that a dog's reward center was highly stimulated when positive words were spoken in a positive tone. For dogs, a nice praise can work well as a reward especially if the words and intonation match.

Comment: *This study reveals what good trainers already know- that sincere verbal praise can be a great training tool. While this study didn't exactly say it – it does imply that a dog can tell fake praise from real praise – so be careful what you say AND how you say it! SEM*

Veterinarians: Lepto is unusually prevalent in Chicago (WLS-TV (Chicago)) 9/26 WBBM-TV (Chicago)) 9/22

Chicago veterinarians have seen an increase in the number of leptospirosis cases this year. Leptospirosis can be contracted by exposure to water contaminated with urine from wildlife such as rats. This commonly happens when dogs either lick up contaminated water directly, lick it off their paws or even by sniffing it. Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, lack of urination and kidney failure and in some cases it can lead to death. Treatment consists of antibiotics and symptomatic care. Because leptospirosis can be spread to humans – who can have the same symptoms – good hygiene is important as is vaccinating your dog.

Comment: As a number of recent studies have shown, leptospirosis is not just a rural concern but an urban one as well- and maybe more so. With many of the vaccines going to every 2-3 year schedules, there are still several that still need to be done on a yearly basis – leptospirosis is one of them. Is your dog current on its lepto vaccination? SEM

GI microbiome patterns identify IBD in dogs (ScienceDaily) 10/3

Inflammatory bowel disease, IBD, is a family of diseases characterized by chronic inflammation in the digestive tract which causes chronic pain, severe diarrhea and weight loss. Scientists using 16S rRNA sequencing were able to quickly identify millions of bacterial species living in a mixed sample, based on the unique genes they harbor. Using this technique, specimens from IBD affected dogs and non-IBD affected dogs could be distinguished with more than a 90 percent accuracy. It is not clear whether the microbial patterns associated with the IBD samples were the cause of the disease or a result of the disease. Currently this technique to diagnose IBD in dogs is not available.

Comment: The more information we know about this chronic disease the better tools we will have to diagnose and treat it. SEM

N.C. State U, researcher develops canine transitional cell carcinoma DNA test (WRAL TechWire.com (Raleigh, N.C.)) 10/11

N.C. State University professor Matthew Breen has developed a DNA test able to detect bladder cancer, canine transitional cell carcinoma, in a simple urine test. Results of the test can help guide treatment decisions. The test can also be used as a screening test for those breeds at risk for the disease allowing for detection of the disease even before signs appear,

Comment: A new great tool in our fight against cancer in our canine companions. AKC has partnered with Breen's company to allow breeders and owners to screen dogs for the disease – tests can be ordered through AKC. SEM

Out-of-state auction dogs coming to Wis. must be brucellosis-free (Wisconsin State Journal (Madison)) 10/30

To protect human and animal health, Wisconsin announced that dogs entering the state from auctions must be certified brucellosis free. Brucellosis is a lifelong infection. It is readily transmitted between dogs that are intact, causing reproductive and other health problems and can be transmitted to humans. Having no ready cure it is often a death sentence for dogs that contract it. In the U.S. the disease is most frequently found in dogs from Southern states.

Comment: While this is a start, I would like to see all states require this and also for it to include dogs imported/rescued from outside the U.S. SEM

Chemotherapy success in dogs paves way for human trials (ScienceDaily) 11/17

A revolutionary injectable cancer-fighting drug regimen that delivers a cisplatin containing compound directly into a tumor is showing promise in treating and even eliminating some cancers. Cisplatin is combined with hyaluron to create a non-destructive local injection that sticks well to cancer cells, allowing for an efficient uptake of cisplatin into the tumor cells. The combination is also of small molecular size which allows the drug, after doing its work on the tumor cells, to be drained easily into lymph nodes, delivering a high dose of chemotherapy to any cancer cells that may have spread there. A canine version of the drug appears to be on the fast track to becoming available on the market and may lead to human clinical trials of a human version.

Comment: Another exciting development in our fight against cancer. SEM

Ancient dog lineage could run with wolves (DiscoverMagazine.com) 11/17

Using energy-tracking wildlife collars intended for wolves, researchers found that northern breeds had superior aerobic endurance compared with retrievers and hounds. Ancient lineages that are closer to their wolf ancestors and that yielded Siberian Huskies, Alaskan Malamutes and Samoyeds tend to be more athletic than those breeds further removed from their wolf ancestry. Even if the northern breed dogs were household pets that had never pulled anything they retained their athleticism. For the northern breeds they found that a trotting gait was the most efficient way to move. The findings were a bit serendipitous as the researchers were just looking to calibrate a new wildlife collar by using dog breeds.

Comment: Research is showing what most northern breed owners already know – our breeds are great athletes and that the trot is their most efficient gait. Now to encourage our breed judges to reward that in the ring and for breeders to retain that in their lines. SEM

New canine lymphoma drug sent for FDA evaluation (The Coloradoan (Fort Collins, Colo.) (tiered subscription model) 11/27

A new drug may be the first FDA-approved drug for use in dogs with lymphoma. The drug would be given every three weeks for up to five treatments. The company, VetDC, is making every effort to make the cost of the new treatment within the cost of commonly used chemotherapy treatments used today.

Comment: Another promising new treatment for cancer. It is also nice to see a company trying to keep the costs reasonable for cancer treatment. SEM

Veterinary News: There is another new cancer treatment that has just come on the market, K9-ACV. This treatment is available for tumors that can be surgically removed. A specimen of the tumor is sent to the lab for processing and a vaccine is prepared from the sample. Three doses of the cancer vaccine are then administered at set intervals. For more information e-mail info@medivetbiologics.com