



Dr. Chretin poses with one of his oncology patients—a great success story

# How Important Is Your Pet's Health?

By Dr. Johnny Chretin

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When it comes to your pet...nothing is more important during a severe medical crisis than cutting-edge therapy.

### What are the more common cancers in animals?

Blood cell tumors are among the most common group of cancers we see. They include mast cell tumors, leukemia's and lymphoma. Lymphoma, in particular is a cancer that arises from a type of white blood cell called a lymphocyte. It accounts for 20% of all the malignancies that we see.

### Cutting Edge Therapy for Cancer

VCA West Los Angeles Animal Hospital is an accredited, full service general and referral hospital. Our oncology department is pleased to be able to offer advanced diagnostic testing, chemotherapy, surgery and radiation therapy. We play an active role in clinical trials investigating new therapies and for the past year, we have offered bone marrow transplantation using stem cells. Autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation is being used for the treatment of lymphoma in dogs. However, VCA West LA will soon expand to include leukemia's and other types of cancers as well. The process involves collecting stem cells from your pet's blood followed by curative intent, total body irradiation. Once the irradiation is complete, the collected stem cells are returned to the patient through an IV, just like a blood transfusion. For lymphoma patients, standard chemotherapy alone is often successful in improving and extending quality of life, however, cures occur in 3% or less of patients. With chemotherapy and transplantation a cure rate of 40% or higher can be expected.

### Early Detection and Oncology

As head of the VCA oncology department, our team consists of one other oncologist, three registered veterinary technicians and an oncology liaison. In addition to medical oncology, my training also extends to radiation oncology. As an oncologist, it's my job to construct plans and perform essential treatments. It's important to note that animals develop the same diseases as humans, but many times the diseases are referred to by different names.

### Animals Can Get the Same Diseases As Humans

In human medicine doctors look for treatments in one species, but veterinary medicine looks to treat all species. My specialized training in the diagnosis of cancer includes the staging of tumors, development of treatment plans, and the administration of chemo and radio therapy. Working with your veterinarian we at VCA achieve the best outcome for your pet.

### Other Services Offered

VCA West LA's services also include cardiologists, neurologists, internal medicine, acupuncturists, chiropractors, and behaviorists to name a few.

### Best Advice for Pet Owners

Because pets cannot speak for themselves, owners have to watch for signs they may be sick, and don't delay getting a checkup. Many new treatment options are available. If electing for treatment, early detection combined with cutting-edge therapy can mean the difference between recovery or not.



A pet receiving an oncology treatment at VCA

As a Board Certified veterinarian and Head of the Oncology Department at VCA West Los Angeles Animal Hospital, Dr. Johnny D. Chretin is a foremost authority in Oncology treatment for animals. Dr. Chretin has authored and co-authored several publications and is an invited speaker at veterinary conferences throughout the United States.



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