

FDA OKs First Cancer Drug For Dogs

Palladia Offers Hope When Human Drugs Fail

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BOSTON -- A cancer diagnosis can be devastating -- even when the patient is the family pet.

NewsCenter 5's Liz Brunner reported Monday that local veterinarians and dog owners are optimistic about [Palladia](#), the first FDA-approved cancer fighting drug designed to treat canine mast cell tumors, which account for one in five cases of canine skin tumors.

Dog owner Kim Waite and her pit bull mix Angel have been together nine years. They're now in their third bout of canine cancer.

"It was hard information to grasp at first it was overwhelming," said Waite. "She's my baby. It's pretty much me and her."

"In the past we always had to rely on human drugs," said veterinarian oncologist Dr. Kim Cronin, who runs the New England Veterinary Oncology Group in Waltham. She said in some cases human medications "don't work or can cause side effects for our patients."

But for the past six weeks or so, Cronin has had a new treatment option for cancer-stricken dogs.

"Palladia is a different option from chemotherapy," said Cronin. "So that dogs who are resistant to chemotherapy may not be resistant to Palladia."

The treatment works by cutting off the tumor's blood supply. During testing, 40 percent of dogs responded well to Palladia, however Cronin said it's too soon to know what the outcome will be for the five or six of her patients currently receiving the treatment.

"I like the convenience of it," said Angel's owner. "It's every other day. It's an oral medication. She doesn't have to come in and get injections. She's been fine, running around, jumping, eating, drinking -- her usual. I'm hoping for the best."

Cronin said most dogs seem to tolerate Palladia well, but it does have side effects similar to human chemotherapy drugs, including loss of appetite, weight loss and gastrointestinal problems.

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