

Fundraising Walks Set to Benefit Pet Cancer Research

Sponsor to mark its fifth annual awareness month in November.

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Cats and dogs can be affected by cancer, and treatments are often expensive. To help celebrate its fifth annual Pet Cancer Awareness Month, Veterinary Pet Insurance has partnered with the Animal Cancer Foundation to raise funds for pet cancer research. The commemoration will include pet cancer awareness walks in Long Beach, Calif., on Nov. 14 and in Brooklyn on Oct. 24.

VPI also encourages pet owners to donate to the Animal Cancer Foundation by purchasing pet cancer awareness collars and wristbands at its website.

The Brea, Calif., company launched the observance after noticing that cancer diagnoses often caught pet owners by surprise. In fact, cancer is among the most common and costly pet conditions, according to VPI.

In 2008, VPI received almost 30,000 claims for treating pet cancer. The company's claims data draws from a population of more than 450,000 insured pets.

The most common form of pet cancer is lymphosarcoma, which made up about a fifth of the claims. Other common forms included cancers of the spleen, eyelid, liver, thorax, brain or spinal cord; mast cell tumors; osteogenic sarcoma; fibrosarcoma; and hemangiopericytoma.

Fibrosarcomas stem from connective tissues while hemangiopericytoma is a tumor generally arising on a limb.

To detect cancer early, pet owners should be attentive to any growing lump or sore that fails to heal, drastic changes in a pet's appetite or weight, unusually strong odors, discharge or bleeding from any body opening, difficulty chewing or swallowing or an unwillingness to exercise.