

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

Midwest Wolfhound



Spring

A quarterly newsletter for Irish Wolfhounds & their people

*Volume LXX
Spring 2024*

Secretary's Report

- Track progress of the club and view the official record of each board meeting
- February- Annual Member's Meeting Minutes

Calendar of Events

- Find locations, dates, & details of events GLIWA is participating in. Please join us!

Spotlight on Health

- The health & wellbeing of our hounds is our highest priority. Here you will find articles on health care, behavior, training and nutrition
 - [Is Pet Insurance Worth the Cost?](#)
 - [Blastomycosis in Dogs](#)
 - [New Cancer Immunotherapy for Dogs](#)

Quarterly Photos & Brags

MIDWEST WOLFHOUND™

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Milwaukee St. Patrick's Parade- Mark Bettin

Secretary's Report



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION Annual Members Meeting Agenda of February 17, 2024

The meeting was called to order at **6:08 pm** by Risha Cupit-Berzins, President:

Board members Present: *(tick the box if present)*

Risha Chris Michelle Mark Debbie Maria Helen Courtney Jen

Board members Absent: *(tick the box if absent)*

Risha Chris Michelle Mark Debbie Maria Helen Courtney Jen

Reading of the Minutes: The president would like a motion from the Board to approve the minutes as printed in the MWW.

Motioned by Maria, Seconded by Chris. Motion passed.

President-

I'd like to welcome all GLIWA Members to our Annual Members Meeting 2024 and thank Dr. Chris Bernstein for bringing Emmy and agreeing to talk with us about wolfhound health this evening.

"The slate of candidates to be elected by consensus as no nomination by petitions for any office or dictatorship was filed as per article VII, section 6 of the bylaws."

Motioned by Chris, Seconded by Birgitta. Motion passed.

Report of the Nominating Committee Official Slate for Election 2024:

Officers	1 year term
President	Risha Cupit-Berzins
Vice President	Chris Krowzack Bernstein
Secretary	Michelle Whittenhall
Treasurer	Mark Bettin

Officers	Completing 2 year term, not up for re-election
Director	Courtney Smith
Director	Jen Van Order

Officers	Beginning 2 year term
Director	Debbie Greene
Director	Maria Lubera
Director	Helen Philpott

Annual Meeting adjourned at: **6:14 pm**.

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

Board Member Meeting of February 25, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Risha Cupit-Berzins, President:

Board members Present: (*tick the box if present*)

Risha Chris Michelle Mark Debbie Maria Helen Courtney Jen

Board members Absent: (*tick the box if absent*)

Risha Chris Michelle Mark Debbie Maria Helen Courtney Jen

Guests in attendance: none

Reading of Minutes: None to be read

Reports

President: N/A

Vice President: We received compliments on the GLIWA dinner speech. GLIWA will post Chris' speech on the member's portion of the website.

Secretary / Membership: The membership is updated on the member's portion of website. Parade information is posted on the events page.

Treasurer: 2024 membership has brought in \$540. Spent about \$400 for admin/parade sashes/etc. Rescue is up \$350 from last year. Fun Match up \$1500 from last year.

Activities: Parades are confirmed. Chicago Southside, Manhattan, Milwaukee.

Southern parades: Dogtown (on st patrick's day), Florissant MO (3/10), Missouri River Irish fest (Memorial Day).

Fun Run at Odd Duck Farm will be in June. Official date to come.

Fun Match: We have secured Linda King, Ard Rhi Irish Wolfhounds, from Virginia, as our 2024 GLIWA Fun Match judge.

The Cudahy Kennel Club and Packing House, have both been booked for 2024. I ordered the pottery again from Don Goodrich. Bowls will be ordered soon.

This year Risha is looking for someone to be the Auction Chair, and also, looking for Sponsorship Chair. She is happy to share information from doing this previous years to help facilitate the transition to a new person.

Hospitality: none

Publications: none

Rescue: 4 dogs in Missouri. GLIWA has a joint rescue venture with mid-south club. Helping with transport.

Policy: Possibly updating wording in policy/bylaws. Table for discussion later.

Ways and Means: none

Old Business: 2024 National Specialty: Helen sent Mike Cherry a list for volunteer positions. Helen will follow up on status.

New Business: Annual Member's Meeting: people seemed to like the venue. The food wasn't great so next year they will evaluate other menu options if we have it at Normandy Room again. Can also send out a survey to ask members where they prefer to have it.

Next Board Meeting to be announced at a later date for May.

Michelle motioned to adjourn, Debbie seconded, motion approved.

Board Meeting adjourned at: 10:50 AM



GLIWA Calendar 2024

Come join us and enjoy the day with your wolfhounds! Visit the [website](#) for more info.



GLIWA Annual Picnic Saturday May 11th

Picnic begins at 12:00

Pilcher Park Nature Center

2501 Highland Park Dr, Joliet, IL 60432

<https://jolietpark.org/pilcher-park-nature-center>

Pilcher Park is a beautiful 700-acre park with great walking trails and a fantastic Nature Center as well as formal gardens at Bird Haven Greenhouse. It is the perfect spot for our Great Lakes Irish Wolfhound Annual Picnic and a great way to meet fellow Wolfhound owners.

GLIWA will supply the main course. We ask that you supply a small side as follows:

- Last names starting with A-M please bring a side .
- Last names starting with N-Z please bring dessert.

*This event is **open** to both members & non-members & is a great way to get to know the club!

Please RSVP [here](#).

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IWCA's 94th National Specialty May 20-22, 2024

The Irish Wolfhound Club of America (our breed's only AKC recognized Parent Club) is holding its National Specialty Show at Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO from May 19 to 23.

Information here: www.iwclubofamerica.org/2024-event-schedule

Wolfhounds and their owners will journey from all over the country for lure coursing, straight line racing, conformation showing, obedience and rally trials, and important health testing and educational events. Whether you hope to own an Irish Wolfhound in the future or would like to know more about particular activities you can enjoy with your hounds, this is a wonderful opportunity to watch, learn and enjoy each other's company. Want to get involved and make new Wolfhound friends? Consider volunteering during the Irish Wolfhound Club of America's National Specialty Show at Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO from May 19- to 23.

Help for an hour or two, or volunteer to help all week by contacting:

-  Show Co-Chair: [Helen Philpott](mailto:helen@EnglishHedgerow.com) helen@EnglishHedgerow.com
-  Grounds Chair: [Michael Cherry](mailto:michaelcherry1704@comcast.net) michaelcherry1704@comcast.net
-  Auction Chair: [Johannah Lawrie](mailto:johannah_lawrie@hotmail.com) johannah_lawrie@hotmail.com
- 

Not able to join the fun and volunteer during the Irish Wolfhound Club of America's National Specialty Show at Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO?

Please consider personally representing your Regional Club by sponsoring an item for "coffee & cookie" table. Donations should be sent to GLIWA Treasurer, Mark Bettin, GLIWAtreas@gmail.com. Please mark your donation IWCA Hospitality.

Thank you for your generosity and your willingness to give a big Midwest welcome to all those attending from across the country!



Spotlight on Health



Is Pet Insurance Worth the Cost?



By Sarah Schlichter
Edited by Caitlin Constantine

Pet insurance can be expensive, but you might be glad to have it if your best pal gets seriously sick or injured.

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You come home to find your dog vomiting and listless. After rushing them to the vet, you learn that they swallowed one of your socks and needs emergency surgery — to the tune of several thousand dollars. Can you afford to pay that bill? If not, pet insurance might be worth considering.

Pet insurance helps cover the cost of medical care for your furry friend. It can reimburse you for expenses like cancer treatment, emergency care, prescription medications and surgery.

In some dire scenarios, pet insurance could save the life of an animal that would otherwise be euthanized if its owner couldn't afford treatment. But if your pet rarely gets sick, you could end up paying thousands of dollars in premiums without getting much in return.

So is pet insurance worth it? Here's some information to help you make the decision.

The rise of pet insurance

A growing number of owners are choosing to insure their pets. More than 5.6 million U.S. dogs and cats were covered by pet insurance in 2023 — an increase of 17% from the year before, according to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association, or NAPHIA. The number of insured cats and dogs in the U.S. has more than doubled since 2019.

That's significant growth, but the industry still covers only a small fraction of American pets. In the U.S., there are an estimated 65 million households with dogs and nearly 47 million households with cats, according to the 2023-2024 American Pet Products Association National Pet Owners Survey.

What pet insurance costs

The average annual cost for an accident and illness policy is about \$676 for dogs and \$383 for cats, according to NAPHIA data from 2023[1]. That works out to about \$56 a month for dogs and \$32 a month for cats.

If you choose an accident-only policy, the annual cost drops to \$204 for dogs and \$116 for cats. Such plans will cover treatment if your pet is hit by a car or swallows something poisonous, for example, but won't pay if they get sick.

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Premiums may vary significantly based on your pet's age and breed, the cost of veterinary care where you live and the insurance policy you choose.

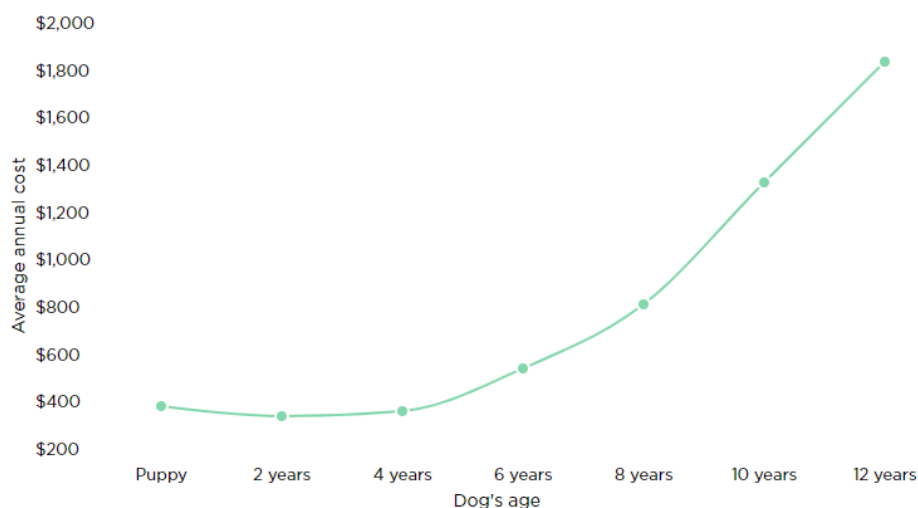
Be aware that rates tend to increase as your pet gets older and more prone to health issues. If the plan gets too expensive for your budget, you might end up canceling the coverage just when your pet is starting to need it most.

To see how much rates might rise over time, we checked sample quotes from Pets Best, a popular pet insurer, for a medium-sized, mixed-breed dog in Katy, Texas. Here are the monthly prices we found for a policy with a \$5,000 annual limit, \$500 deductible and 80% reimbursement level:

Dog's age	Monthly rate
3 months	\$35.11.
2 years	\$31.50.
4 years	\$33.61.
6 years	\$48.34.
8 years	\$70.99.
10 years	\$114.10.
12 years	\$156.59.

That may not seem too dramatic when you see the increases monthly, but here's how your average annual cost would change over 12 years of your dog's life:

The cost of pet insurance for a dog over time



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We also got quotes from Pets Best for a domestic shorthair cat in the same ZIP code. (Rates run through age 14 to reflect a cat's longer expected life span.)

Cat's age	Monthly rate
3 months	\$22.45.
2 years	\$20.14.
4 years	\$20.35.
6 years	\$28.82.
8 years	\$40.69.
10 years	\$61.88.
12 years	\$91.41.
14 years	\$107.09.

Though the overall premiums are lower for cats, there's a similarly sharp price increase as they age.

In the end, you'll likely pay thousands of dollars for insurance if you maintain the policy over the life of your pet.

Remember that these are sample numbers for one pet insurance company in one ZIP code. Your price will vary, so it's worth shopping around.

What pet insurance pays for

So what do all those premiums get you? Though insurance can be a godsend if your pet is facing an expensive diagnosis, your plan likely won't reimburse every dollar you spend at the vet.

Deductibles, limits and payouts

Most policies come with an annual deductible, the amount you're responsible for before the insurer starts paying. Once you've met your deductible, most plans pay out a certain percentage of your vet bill — typically 70%, 80% or 90%. And you may be subject to an annual maximum payout.

Insurers don't all handle deductibles and reimbursement rates the same way. Some apply your deductible first, then pay a percentage of the remaining bill. Others apply your reimbursement rate even before you've reached your deductible, which means you'll need to spend more out of pocket before you're eligible for reimbursement.

Say you have a \$500 deductible on a plan that pays up to \$10,000 per year and reimburses 80% of your costs. If your dog needs a \$2,000 surgery and you haven't put anything toward the deductible yet, your plan would pay either \$1,100 or \$1,200, depending on when your reimbursement rate is applied. Here's the math.

When the deductible is applied first: $\$2,000 - \$500 \text{ deductible} = \$1,500$. $80\% \text{ of } \$1,500 = \$1,200$.

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When the reimbursement rate is applied first: $\$2,000 \times 0.8 = \$1,600$. $\$1,600 - \$500 = \$1,100$.

You can often customize your plan with a lower deductible or higher reimbursement rate, but your premium will go up accordingly.

What's covered and what's not

Even if you find a plan with no annual limit and 100% reimbursement, it still might not pay you back for every veterinary expense.

For example, most plans won't cover spay or neuter surgery unless you've bought an add-on for wellness and preventive care. The same goes for vaccinations, annual checkups and teeth cleaning. Insurance is designed to cover unexpected expenses, not routine costs associated with pet ownership.

But pre-existing conditions are perhaps the most important exclusion in just about every pet insurance plan. Pet insurance generally covers only new injuries or illnesses, not conditions the animal has before the policy takes effect. So don't try buying pet insurance to pay for your cat's chemotherapy after they were diagnosed with cancer — it probably won't be covered.

That's why pet insurance may be more valuable for pets who are young and healthy than those who already have a chronic condition or two.

Pre-existing conditions can also be a problem if you let your policy lapse. Say you're out of work for a few months and can't pay Fluffy's premiums. If you reinstate their coverage later, all their previous ailments will count as pre-existing conditions, even those the earlier plan covered.

For more details on what's covered and what's not, see our guide to pet insurance coverage.

The cost of veterinary care

Dog owners spend an average of \$472 each year on surgical vet visits and \$250 each year on routine vet visits, according to 2022 survey statistics from APPA. Cat owners have lower annual expenses on average, spending \$232 on surgical vet visits and \$198 on routine vet visits. (Remember: Most pet insurance plans don't cover routine care unless you pay extra.)

[to the right] are the most common types of pet insurance claims for dogs and cats, according to 2021 data from NAPHIA, the latest available.

Dogs	Cats
1. Urinary tract infection.	1. Urinary tract infection.
2. Otitis/ear infection.	2. Diabetes.
3. Gastroenteritis.	3. Vomiting/emesis.
4. Diarrhea.	4. Kidney disease.
5. Dermatology/skin conditions (allergies, irritation, infections, mass).	5. Hyperthyroidism.
6. Arthritis.	6. Gastroenteritis.
7. Allergies.	7. Diarrhea.
8. Lameness.	8. Upper respiratory infection.
9. Vomiting.	9. Respiratory.
10. Seizure.	10. Cancer/growth/oncology.

Some conditions on this list are relatively minor and inexpensive to treat, such as a urinary tract infection resolved with a course of antibiotics. But others could rack up significantly more expenses.

For example, one common skin mass in dogs is a mast cell tumor, a type of cancer. Surgery to remove one of these tumors could cost \$500 to more than \$1,000. For tumors that are aggressive or hard to remove surgically, your vet may also recommend radiation or chemotherapy, which can cost thousands of dollars.

If your pet faces only minor health conditions throughout his life, you may end up paying far more for pet insurance than you get back. But if something serious goes wrong, the insurance may be well worth it.

Alternatives to pet insurance

If you'd rather not buy pet insurance, you can try one of the following ways to pay for your furry pal's care.

Self-funding

Instead of paying a monthly premium to a pet insurance company, you could contribute to a high-yield savings account for vet expenses.

The advantage of this strategy is that if your pet stays healthy, you'll still have the money to use for something else. The downside is that you might not have enough saved if your puppy has an expensive accident three months after you bring them home.









Financial assistance

If you find yourself unable to afford care for your pet, you still have options. Your vet may be willing to work with you on a payment plan, or you can look for another clinic that charges less for the treatment your pet needs.

You can set up a crowdfunding campaign to help pool the support of friends and family. Charitable organizations may also be able to provide grants or other assistance. The Humane Society of the United States has a useful list of resources.

So, is pet insurance worth it?

Consider buying pet insurance if:

-  Your pet is young and healthy.
-  You don't have enough savings to cover a hefty vet bill.
-  Having insurance coverage gives you peace of mind.
-  Pet insurance may not be worth it if:
 -  Your pet is a senior or has health problems.
 -  A big vet bill wouldn't be a financial hardship for you.
 -  You'd rather take the risk of an expensive diagnosis than pay for insurance you might never use.
 -  Decided you're ready to buy pet insurance? See NerdWallet's list of The Best Pet Insurance Companies.



Blastomycosis in Dogs: Symptoms, Treatment & Prevention



By Dr. Kate Boatright

Associate Veterinarian, Speaker, Author - Penn-Ohio Veterinary Services and KMB Veterinary Media LLC

Owning a dog can be a fun experience, but it can also be quite stressful if they suddenly become ill. This is especially true if your pet develops a health condition many owners are not familiar with, such as blastomycosis.

Learn more about the symptoms of this rare and potentially fatal fungal infection, as well as the treatment options available and whether there are ways to prevent your dog from catching it.

Pro Tip: Pet insurance provides valuable peace of mind by ensuring your loved one has access to gold-standard veterinary care while minimizing your financial risk should they develop a health issue, such as blastomycosis infection.

What is blastomycosis in dogs?

*Blastomycosis is a fungal infection caused by *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, a fungus that lives in the soil and decaying organic matter (such as rotting vegetation). Dogs usually are infected after inhaling fungal spores in the environment.*

Blastomycosis mainly affects the lungs, eyes, and skin. However, a variety of other organs and systems can also be affected, including the heart, bones, lymphatic system, and nervous system. Without treatment, the disease can result in death.

In the US, Blastomycosis is most prevalent in the mid-Atlantic states, especially the warm and moist river valley regions in Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. It also occurs in the Southeastern states, the Pacific Northwest, and around the Great Lakes.

*Infection by *Blastomyces* in dogs most commonly occurs when conidia, the infective fungal particles, are aerosolized. Certain weather conditions, such as rain, fog, and dew are thought to activate these particles, which are then inhaled or absorbed by the dog's skin. Most cases of blastomycosis in dogs are diagnosed in early fall or late summer.*

Are all breeds at risk?

Blastomycosis can affect dogs, cats, and humans, but dogs appear to be more susceptible. According to [VCA Animal Hospitals](#), dogs are about ten times more likely to get infected than humans, and 100 times more likely than cats.

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Dogs of any breed, age, and sex can be infected. However, because the disease occurs in habitats characterized by moist soil that contains decaying vegetation such as marshes, birding dogs and hiking companions are considered to be at especially greater risk if they live in a geographic area where *Blastomyces* is present. Large-breed male dogs also seem to be more commonly infected.

Can humans catch blastomycosis from their dogs?

Under normal circumstances, the disease is not transmitted from animal to animal or to humans. However, because the fungus is present in the shared environment of the infected pet and uninfected family members, humans and other animals are at risk for developing an infection from the spores in the environment as well.

As mentioned earlier, blastomycosis is considered relatively uncommon in humans. In the rare event that direct transmission does occur, it is when secretions from an open, draining wound on the dog come into contact with an open wound on the human. For this reason, if your dog is infected, be sure to follow strict hygiene rules when handling their lesions. Always wear protective gloves and wash your hands well after every contact with the infected pet. In most cases, the infected dog doesn't need to be separated from other members of the household.

If you're concerned that you might have been exposed to blastomycosis or if your dog is infected, be sure to contact your physician. This is especially important if members of your family are small children, elderly, chemotherapy patients, or have a compromised immune system.

Blastomycosis symptoms in dogs

Depending on which system is affected, symptoms of blastomycosis in dogs can include:

- Fever
- Poor appetite
- Depression
- Weight loss
- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the lymph nodes
- Limping
- Eye inflammation
- Eye discharge
- Skin lesions
- Orchitis (testicular inflammation)
- Seizures

In many dogs, the disease affects multiple organ systems. According to [DVM360](#), respiratory issues occur in 65% to 85% of affected dogs. Skin lesions (open, oozing sores on the nose, mouth, or paw pads, pimples, rash-like lesions) are observed in 30% to 50% of canine patients. Ocular symptoms (blindness, eye redness, squinting) are also quite common, affecting around 50% of infected pets.

If your canine companion has been in an environment where *Blastomyces* might have been present in the six weeks before the onset of clinical signs, be sure to inform your veterinarian, especially if you traveled to this area.

How is blastomycosis diagnosed?

Blastomycosis can be tricky to diagnose because the symptoms are often non-specific. For instance, infections of the

lung can look like cancer on imaging tests, whereas skin lesions can be mistaken for a skin infection.

The best methods for diagnosing the condition include:

- An analysis of fluid drained from skin lesions
- A microscopic examination of lymph node cells and lung tissues through cytology or biopsy
- The collection of fluids from the windpipe (tracheal wash)



Tissue samples might also be taken to check for the presence of fungal organisms. Other tests that might help make a final diagnosis include a urinalysis and an [X-ray](#) of the lungs or leg (if the dog is limping). There are also newer specialized tests that can help to identify the fungal organism in the blood and urine.

Blastomycosis treatment in dogs

Blastomycosis is treated with oral antifungal medication (usually fluconazole or itraconazole), which can be quite expensive because of the duration of treatment. The medication must be administered for a minimum of six to eight weeks. In some cases, treatment can require more than one year in order to clear the infection.

In severe cases, the affected dog may need an extended period of hospitalization, especially if they suffer from severe respiratory symptoms. Dogs with [dyspnea](#) (severe difficulty breathing) might require supplemental oxygen.

Eye infections can be especially difficult to treat and your vet might refer you to a veterinary ophthalmologist (eye specialist). Topical eye medications can alleviate the discomfort and pain but usually don't help clear the infection.

In some cases, the affected organs need to be removed to eliminate the fungal organism, such as castration for male dogs with orchitis. In dogs who have lost vision due to the ocular form of the disease, the eye(s) might need to be removed to clear the infection. Most dogs do very well following enucleation (removal of the eyes), especially if they had previously lost their sight. In cases of severe bone infection, your pet might need limb amputation.

Canine blastomycosis patients are discharged from the hospital with instructions to administer ophthalmic or oral medications. Topical treatment of skin lesions might also be required.

Prognosis, management, and recovery

The initial prognosis for dogs with blastomycosis is guarded and depends on the response to treatment. According to the [Merck Veterinary Manual](#), approximately 70% of dogs will reach a clinical cure. The prognosis is better for patients with mild disease at the time of diagnosis.

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In most cases, the critical period is in the first 24 to 72 hours of treatment, during which the medication is taking effect. In some cases, a severe inflammatory response might occur as the medication begins to kill off the fungal organisms, resulting in respiratory distress because of the large number of organisms in the lungs.

Even when treatment appears to be successful, there is a risk of relapse that can occur months to years after the initial infection. Up to 20% of dogs who have recovered will experience relapse. Patients with the ocular, nervous system or testicular involvement seem to be at higher risk of relapse.

Follow-up testing of the urine with a urine antigen test is usually recommended in order to determine whether the treatment plan is working. Chest X-rays can be used to help determine response to treatment and reveal any permanent changes in the lungs that might have resulted from the treatment.

Is blastomycosis preventable?

There is no vaccine to prevent blastomycosis in dogs. The only thing pet dog owners can do is keep their canine friends away from marshy landscapes, as well as streams and lakes where the risk of exposure is the highest. If you live or spend time in high-risk regions, this will likely be difficult, but you should at least try to stay away from dark, dense areas where the fungus thrives, especially if your pet's immune system is already weakened.

Key Takeaways

- Blastomycosis is a potentially fatal fungal disease. It most commonly affects dogs living near a body of water, such as hunting and sporting dogs, as well as large breeds living in or near wet areas in endemic regions in the United States.*
- The most common clinical signs of blastomycosis include respiratory changes, skin lesions, ocular changes (including blindness), fever, weight loss, and depression. But the disease can present in many ways.*
- Oral antifungal drugs are the treatment choice and are used for a minimum of two months.*
- Early diagnosis and aggressive treatment are key to successfully treating canine blastomycosis. If your dog has been diagnosed with this disease, be sure to follow your vet's recommendations and keep up with all follow-up visits so the disease and treatment can be monitored.*



*ELIAS Animal Health gets USDA approval
for new cancer immunotherapy*



By Emily Singler, VMD - 3/6/2024

ELIAS Animal Health, a companion animal cancer therapeutics company, recently announced that their new technology for the treatment of osteosarcoma in dogs has been determined to have reasonable expectation of efficacy by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This decision opens the path to licensure for the novel treatment option aimed at treating a deadly, aggressive cancer in canine patients.

I spoke with Tammie Wahaus, CEO of ELIAS Animal Health, and Noe Reyes, DVM, chief medical officer, to learn more about this new therapy. The ELIAS Cancer Immunotherapy (ECI®) combines the creation of an individualized whole cancer cell vaccine with the collection, activation, and reinfusion of T-cell lymphocytes that are primed to recognize and attack osteosarcoma cells in the body.

ELIAS has been working on this technology for more than 10 years, and they are very encouraged by the results from experimental clinical use in dogs.

What is ECI?

ECI has two components: autologous whole cell cancer vaccines and adoptive T-cell therapy. To make the cancer vaccines, a sample from the patient's cancer tissue must be obtained and sent to ELIAS Animal Health. There, scientists will create a vaccine that is specific to the cancer cells in the sample. This personalized cancer vaccine is then administered intradermally to the patient by their veterinarian.

The second stage is adoptive T-cell therapy. After the patient has received a series of three vaccines, their T-cells (also referred to as mononuclear cells or MNCs) must be harvested so that they can be "activated" to fight the cancer cells in the body. To accomplish this, the patient must undergo a procedure called apheresis, whereby the patient's blood is run through a specialized machine that separates out and collects the T-cells and returns everything else to the body.

The collected T-cells that have already been exposed to the cancer antigens via the vaccines are then sent to ELIAS, where they are activated so that they are not suppressed by any signals the tumor cells are releasing to avoid destruction.

After these cells have been activated, they are returned to the patient by IV infusion. The patient is then given a series of subcutaneous interleukin-2 (IL-2) injections. The expectation is that these activated cells will recognize and attack osteosarcoma cells throughout the body on an ongoing basis.

Safety and efficacy of ECI

According to Reyes, more than 200 canine patients diagnosed with osteosarcoma have undergone this treatment. He notes that success rates vary based on the stage of the patient's cancer and the health of their immune system. What's different between ECI and other treatment modalities, Reyes points out, is that ECI can potentially generate a "sustained immune effect that will continue to go after the cancer without the need for further treatment."

Like other modalities, ECI will be most effective in cases where the cancer cell load in the body is low. It can also be used in combination with other therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

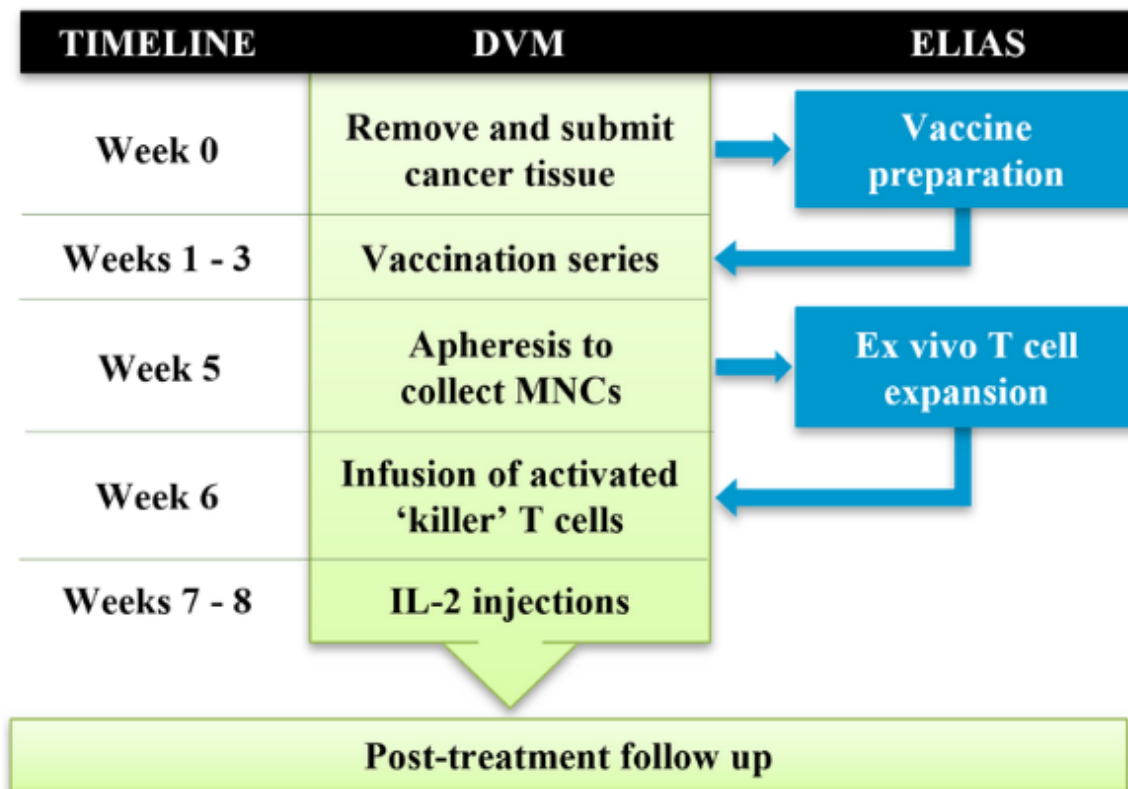
Large tumors should still be surgically removed, Reyes clarifies, but ECI can be used to try to kill any remaining cancer cells and possibly prevent future relapse. Chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment are still helpful adjunctive therapies, he explains, as they can "break up" the cancer cells, exposing the antigens to the immune system where the primed T-cells can deal with them.

Case study: Roscoe

Reyes recalls an "exceptional case;" a dog named Roscoe, who had undergone the three vaccines and the adoptive T cell therapy who later started limping and was diagnosed with a distant limb metastasis. Roscoe's owners decided at that point not to pursue further treatment other than palliative care.

Months later, when researchers called to check on Roscoe, the owners reported that he was running around the backyard with no signs of pain or lameness. A follow-up CT scan revealed no evidence of cancer anywhere in the body. Roscoe went on to live for years after this and died of unrelated causes.

OVERVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDED ECI® PROTOCOL



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Is ECI safe?

The safety profile for ECI, Reyes adds, is “extraordinarily good.” The main safety risk is for a condition known as cytokine release syndrome or cytokine storm, the result of the immune system releasing too many inflammatory molecules (cytokines) in response to the infusion of the activated T-cells. In all the dogs who have been treated so far, there have been fewer than six cases, Reyes reports, in which a clinician has needed to use a rescue protocol due to cytokine release syndrome. After receiving the high dose glucocorticoid rescue protocol, all these dogs recovered and did well.

What’s Next for ECI?

Wahaus points out that since ELIAS is the first to come to market with this type of technology, the “regulatory landscape is still evolving.” They are still waiting to learn what restrictions the USDA will impose on licensure of ECI for the treatment of osteosarcoma in dogs.

Even while they wait, the team at ELIAS is exploring ways to make this therapy more accessible and more effective. This includes improving access to apheresis machines throughout the country, Reyes adds. He reports the ELIAS has already set up a network of 17 apheresis centers throughout the United States, with more planned for the future. ELIAS also plans to study the efficacy of the combination of ECI along with an immune checkpoint inhibitor to treat metastatic disease in dogs. According to Wahaus, immune checkpoint inhibitors interfere with the interaction between the cancer cell and the immune system. Normally, cancer cells try to suppress any cytotoxic activity in immune cells to avoid destruction. The hope is that adding an immune checkpoint inhibitor will interrupt this pathway. ELIAS has been chosen to work with Merck Animal Health to study the combination of ECI and Merck's checkpoint inhibitor, gilvetmab. This study is slated to begin later in 2024.

ELIAS also wants to evaluate the efficacy of ECI against other types of cancer. "ECI should apply to any type of cancer where the source tissue can be isolated," Reyes suggests, "but results vary."

Emily Singler, VMD, is AAHA's Veterinary Content Specialist.

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Milwaukee 56th Annual
Shamrock Club of America
St. Patrick's Day Parade 2024



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



Milwaukee Parade
2024

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION





Southside Parade 2024



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



Southside Parade

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



Thank You to everyone who shared their time and their hounds! You are great ambassadors for the breed!





Manhattan Parade

2024



Congratulations Dave & Risha

The 1st ever Irish Wolfhound and only the 37th Hound to earn a Rally Championship (RACH) title is CH RACH Howlin's MB Tipitina Rose CD BN RM6 RAE2 OJP BCAT JSR CGC TKN. Normally we are all about suffix titles, but this prefix title is a special one.



Member Photos

The Dunes are a great place to enjoy the spring ephemerals!
Photos by Mark Bettin



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

Killian attended his first burn at Hickory Creek Junction.

Photo by Scott Mortenson



Allow me to introduce our first grand dog, Aldo. He is 11 weeks old.

Photo by Jeffery Feldman

Barney meeting
the Easter
Bunny
Photo by Scott
Mitchell

