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# AMSCOPE

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## 7 Subtle Signs of Cancer in Pets That Most Pet Parents Overlook

With cancer in pets, early detection and treatment are critical. By detecting cancer in dogs and cats early, you can work with your veterinarian to increase the chance of cure or *remission*.

Noticing the subtle signs of cancer in dogs and cats early enough can be difficult if you don't know what you are looking for. Sometimes, the signs can be so subtle that pet parents may mistake them as a normal part of aging.

Discuss the following subtle signs of cancer in pets with your veterinarian so that you can catch it early and start a treatment plan.

### 1. Weight Loss

With over half of our nation's pets being overweight or *obese*, weight loss is usually a thing that is celebrated by veterinarians and pet guardians alike. However, weight loss in pets—especially when a pet isn't on a calorie-restricted diet—can be a subtle sign of cancer in dogs and cats.

While some cancers can cause quick and dramatic weight loss that is hard to miss, it is more common that the weight loss is gradual over time. It can be so gradual that it goes unnoticed by the pet parent.

Sometimes, weight loss isn't even noticed until the pet is taken to the veterinarian, and the change in weight is only noted when compared to historical weight measurements.

If a pet is losing weight even though he or she is eating a normal amount of pet food, then the top diseases to consider are diabetes mellitus and cancer.

### 2. Lumps and Bumps

**The deadline  
for the May issue is  
April 8**

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While lumps, bumps and other skin changes are easy to notice on short-haired dogs or cats, many times they go unnoticed on long-haired pets.

Pet guardians will also often postpone a veterinary visit if a lump is small; however, you cannot determine if a skin lump is cancerous based on the size. Even the smallest skin lumps can be cancerous.

Tumors of the mammary chain—also known as breast cancer—are often missed by pet owners. Female dogs and cats, whether they are spayed or not, can develop breast cancer.

Dogs and cats are subject to cancers of the *gastrointestinal* system, vascular system, liver, kidneys, urinary bladder, endocrine glands and the reproductive system. These cancers may cause masses to form in the belly.

If your pet is large or overweight, you may not notice abdominal masses until they get large or become life-threatening, such as in the case of ruptured tumors of the spleen.

Another place where lumps and bumps can be hidden is in the mouth. Dogs and cats can get oral tumors on the gums, hard palate or tongue. Tumors under the tongue are very hard to find unless you are looking for them!

### 3. Changes in Coat

A normal, healthy pet has a glossy, full coat. Changes in the coat, such as hair loss, brittle or dry hair, excessive dandruff or scaling, skin infections, or excessive shedding, could be signs of cancer.

Cancers of the endocrine system, such as tumors on the pituitary, thyroid or adrenal glands, can all cause changes in your pet's coat.

Also, if a body part is painful due to cancer, a dog may excessively lick that area, which can cause brown lick stains.

If a cat feels sick or is in pain due to cancer, they may not groom enough or at all, which can lead to a matted, unkempt coat. Alternatively, cats are also known to overgroom and pull out hair in response to stress or pain.

Overgrooming, no grooming or excessive licking at a body part can be subtle signs of cancer in both dogs and cats.

### 4. Changes in Appetite

Changes in appetite—either increased or decreased—can be subtle signs of cancer in dogs and cats.

If a pet is feeling yucky or is in pain, then they may not want to eat. Conversely, other cancers can cause a pet to eat more than normal. Some cancers consume a lot of calories, which will increase a pet's appetite.

Certain types of aggressive, *malignant* cancers can cause a pet to eat normal or more than normal amounts of food and still lose weight. Tumors of the adrenal or pituitary glands can cause a condition called Cushing's disease, which increases a dog's appetite and causes weight gain.

### 5. Changes in Urination or Bowel Movements

Changes in your pet's bathroom schedule are worthy of note when it comes to early detection. Different types of cancer can cause changes in your pet's potty habits, from an increased need for potty time to constipation.

For example, cancer of the gastrointestinal system can cause diarrhea and/or constipation.

Cancer of the *adrenal gland*, *pituitary gland* or *thyroid gland*, or cancer of the liver or kidneys can increase thirst in dogs and cats, which will lead to an increased need to urinate.

Cancer of the urinary system can increase the urge to pee but obstruct the *urethra*, which makes it difficult to urinate. So, sometimes, pets with urinary cancer have to pee frequently, have accidents inside the house or seem to strain when urinating.

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# LOOK

Please let me know if you make a change

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**Debbie Herrell**

13445 Phal Road  
Grass Lake, MI 49240  
Phone: 517-522-4173  
sercatep@yahoo.com

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## .Cancer.....from p. 1

### 6. Changes in Behavior

Changes in behavior—particularly a lack of energy or lack of interest in the things that used to bring your pet joy; accidents in the house; changes in sleep patterns; pacing; increased aggression or grouchiness; increased sleeping time; or any other abrupt changes in behavior—can all be subtle signs of brain cancer or cancer pain.

Seizures or tremors can also be a sign of brain cancer, and unless you witness the them, seizures can often go missed by pet parents. Some signs that may indicate a pet may have experienced a *seizure* include loss of balance, twitching, excessive drooling and temporary blindness.

### 7. Coughing

Cancer can cause dogs and cats to cough, so any dog or cat that develops a persistent cough needs to be seen by a veterinarian. A persistent cough can be a potential sign of a tumor pressing on an airway, fluid in the lungs or multiple lung tumors.

Persistent coughing can also be a sign of other pet health issues, so if your pet has a cough they cannot seem to kick, it is always best to take them to their veterinarian.

### How You Can Help Detect Cancer in Pets Early

Veterinarians are trained to noticed any abnormalities in your dog or cat, and a veterinary examination is your best weapon against cancer.

However, most pets only see their veterinarian once or twice a year. So, it is helpful if you play an active role in monitoring your pet's health as well. As a pet parent, you see your pet every day, which means you can keep a look out for these potential subtle signs of cancer.

To do at-home checks, you can run your hands over your pet to feel for any lumps or bumps and visually inspect your pet. Don't forget to inspect the nipples in female dogs for any changes, lumps or bumps.

Feel your pet's rib cage for any signs of weight gain or loss. Look in your pet's mouth and check their teeth and gums. Hold a treat out, and let your pet lick the treat while you visually inspect the top and bottom of the tongue.

Pet guardians know their pets best, and by conducting these monthly at-home "inspections," you will be more likely to catch subtle signs of cancer early enough to make a difference.

By: Dr. Sarah Wooten, DVM

## How Much of a Dog's Personality Comes From Their Owner?

by Dr. Wailani Sung, MS, PhD, DVM, DACVB

You may know dogs and people whose personalities are mirror images of each other: a low-key pet parent with an equally mellow pup or an outgoing pet parent with a dog who greets everyone with wet kisses.

This might not actually be just a coincidence, as scientists say that dog personality is strongly linked to human personality.

But, just how similar is a dog's personality to their caretaker? Is the human-animal bond so strong that a dog can adopt personality traits from their owner, and vice versa?

### Personality Similarities Between Dogs and Their People

In a study published in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, researchers asked pet parents to rate themselves on five major personality dimensions (as well as on corresponding personality traits of dogs). "The Big Five," as they're referred to in the psychology community, are:

Neuroticism (a tendency to wards feelings like anxiety and fear)  
 · Extraversion  
 · Conscientiousness  
 · Agreeableness  
 · Openness (level of creativity, curiosity and being open to new ideas)

Pet parents overwhelmingly responded that they share all five personality dimensions with their dogs. To be certain the results weren't mere projection by pet parents, independent peers also assessed the dog and human duos. The independent peers also rated them as sharing all the dimensions, except for openness.

### Why Is Dog Personality Linked to Human Personality?

One explanation why dog behavior and personality is so intertwined with that of their humans is a tendency for people to select animals who complement their own lives. A calm human will often choose a calm dog, or an anxious person will adopt a frightened dog, for example, says Jenn Fiendish, a veterinary behavior

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technician who runs Happy Power Behavior and Training in Portland, Oregon. She believes people do this on a subconscious level.

“When my husband and I went to pick up our new puppy 12 years ago, I immediately chose the one who was more active, feisty and a little scared of things, which is much like my own personality. My husband chose the laid-back, calm and not-bothered-by-things puppy, a perfect match for his personality. This also happened with my other two dogs that we own, both of whom I picked out because they were feisty and a bit out of control (me again!).” Through the years, she says that the dogs have maintained, and even strengthened, some of these personality traits.

Dr. Patrick Mahaney, a veterinarian who owns Los Angeles-based California Pet Acupuncture and Wellness (CPAW), Inc., says he’s seen clients with seemingly neurotic tendencies gravitate towards higher-energy dogs. “Such neurotic owners seem to seek out Weimaraners, Vizslas, herding dogs and other breeds and their mixes that often would feed off of the amped-up energy of their owners.”

**Dog Emotions Mirror Human Emotions**

Given that people and pups have shared a relationship for at least 15 thousand years (scientists debate this timeline), it’s no surprise that dog personality has been impacted.

Fiendish says that dogs have an ability to read and match human emotions. “When a person is very anxious, our dogs understand this and often become anxious as well. If the anxiety is chronic, the dog may also develop chronic anxiety,” she says.

Dr. Mahaney has witnessed this in his practice. “I have observed pets in households where the owners are under a lot of stress [who will] subsequently exhibit behavior problems which could be attributed to the owners’ lack of calming energy.”

Some of the behavior problems he sees include *inappropriate urination and defecation*, destructive tendencies, barking and howling, and decreased appetite.

Dogs are true empaths, says Dr. Lisa Pinn McFaddin, DVM, GDCVHM, CVSMT, CCOAC, CVA, CVFT, medical director at Independent Hill Veterinary Clinic in Manassas, Virginia, and host of a podcast called Vetsplaining. “They can sense minute physiologic changes in people and other animals and respond accordingly.”

The closer the human-animal relationship, the greater the response, adds Dr. McFaddin. “Dogs frequently try to comfort and calm upset owners. People do not always recognize these cues from dogs, as they may be subtle: laying down next to the person, putting their head on the person’s leg, making physical contact with the person or trying to distract the person with a toy.”

**Can a Dog’s Personality Rub Off on Humans?**

While experts say it’s more common for dogs to acquire personality traits from their pet parents, it’s possible for dog emotions and behavior to impact humans, says Dr. McFaddin.

Dr. McFaddin explains, “I most often observe this when people own dogs who are innately anxious. The dog’s anxiety often results in owner anxiety. The person feels helpless to alleviate the anxious behaviors expressed by their pet. This helplessness makes the owner feel uncomfortable, vulnerable and, thus, anxious.”

Physical cues and behaviors that an anxious dog might exhibit—like panting, whining, pacing, destruction of items and incessant barking—can also overstimulate a pet parent, Dr. McFaddin says.

“The constant movement and noise become annoying and disruptive to the owner’s lifestyle, which causes anxiety. On the flip side, some insanely calm dogs (I call them Buddha dogs) help calm owners. The dog’s innate serenity is contagious, physically and emotionally,” she adds.

“Numerous studies have shown a reduction in anxiety, slowing of heart rate, lowering of *blood pressure*, and increased release of calming

hormones and neurotransmitters in the body of both humans and dogs following positive interactions, primarily after petting,” says Dr. McFaddin.

So it seems that both parties can benefit from the human-animal bond.

By: Paula Fitzsimmons



## Studies Reveal a Stunning Treatment for Human Anxiety and Depression

Written by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

For those of us who love and live with dogs, there's absolutely no question they provide not only companionship, fun and affection, but significant mental and physical health benefits as well. Luckily, research is confirming what we already know about the ability of dogs to lower our stress level, decrease anxiety and depression, alleviate loneliness, inspire physical movement and encourage us to play and **stay in the moment.**

Caring for a dog helps kids learn responsibility, gain confidence and be more active. Having a dog who depends on them gives older adults a reason to get up and get moving every day. And all these benefits are wrapped in a funny, furry friend who also offers us the purest form of unconditional love.

### Study Shows Pet Adoption Can Have a Dramatic Effect on Adults With Major Depressive Disorder

A 2018 study published in a psychiatric journal reports that **adopting a pet** can result in lower rates of recurrence in people suffering from severe depression.<sup>1</sup> The benefits are so significant that even patients resistant to antidepressant medications or psychotherapy report improvement in their mental health. According to study authors:

*"Treatment resistant major [depressive] disorder (TR-MDD) is a severe disease, with very low remission rates. The resistance to pharmacotherapy leads to the search of non-pharmacological alternative approaches. Animal therapy has been used in patients with psychiatric conditions and the results have been promising."*

While **animal therapy** has been used for many psychiatric conditions, the study authors noted that it hadn't been tested clinically with patients with TR-MDD. According to Christian Jarrett, Ph.D., writer and editor of the British Psychological Society Research Digest:

*"The prognosis (of TR-MDD) is not good. The low mood and emotional pain for these individuals has not lifted even though they are on a combination of antidepressant medications and may also have participated in psychotherapy."*

Researchers assessed the effects on 33 patients who accepted the challenge to adopt a pet (primarily dogs) among 80 who were asked. Another 33 of that number, who

neither adopted a pet nor had one already, served as the control group. The patients who adopted a pet improved "to the point where their symptoms could be considered mild," reports the U.K.'s Independent.

### Children with Dogs May Be Less Likely to Suffer From Anxiety

In 2015, researchers from the Bassett Medical Center of Cooperstown, New York conducted a study looking into pets and children's health, and in particular, whether having a pet in childhood can help prevent chronic disease.

The study involved 643 children with a mean age of 6.7 years. While no relationship was found between pet ownership and the kids' body mass index, screen time or physical activity, there was an association with anxiety. Compared to children without dogs, a lower percentage of children with dogs met the clinical cut-off value of Screen for Child Anxiety and Related Disorders (SCARED-5, a test used to screen for childhood anxiety disorders).

Specifically, only 12 percent of children with dogs suffered from probable anxiety compared to 21 percent of those without. The study found "pet dog ownership was associated with a 9 percent reduction in the probability of a SCARED-5 score of three or higher," which is the point at which further assessment is recommended to diagnose anxiety.

### Dog Ownership Can Decrease Heart Disease Risk and Increase Longevity

Dog parents have a lower risk of heart disease and premature death than non-dog owners, with the benefit being particularly pronounced among singles. Writing in the journal *Scientific Reports*, researchers explained:

*"Dogs may be beneficial in reducing cardiovascular risk by providing a non-human form of social support and increasing physical activity. Dog ownership has been reported to be associated with alleviation of social isolation and improved perception of wellbeing, particularly in single persons and the elderly."*

Among single-person households, dog owners had a 33 percent lower risk of premature death and a 36 percent lower risk of heart disease than those without a dog. Among those with dogs living in multi-person households, premature death and heart disease death risk were 11 percent and 15 percent lower, respectively.

Part of the benefit could be linked to increased physical activity among dog parents. In older women, for instance, dog ownership was associated with a higher likelihood of walking at least 2.5 hours a week and a lower likelihood of being sedentary for eight or more hours a day.

Another way dogs may boost heart health and longevity is via beneficial effects on blood pressure. In the 10-year-long National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey study of 1,570 people aged 60 years or over, having a dog was associated with a 3.34 mmHg decrease in systolic blood pressure.

*"To put that into perspective,"* Dr. Ragavendra Baliga, a cardiologist and professor of internal medicine at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center, told the Columbus Dispatch, *"even a 2 mm reduction in systolic blood pressure is associated with a 6 percent reduction in stroke, a 4 percent reduction in coronary heart disease and a 3 percent reduction in overall mortality."*

### Seniors With Dogs Are Significantly More Active Than Their Pet-Free Counterparts

## NEW APPLICANTS

### Debra Barnhill

2693 Thurleston Ln.  
Duluth, GA 30097  
[F992@aol.com](mailto:F992@aol.com)

Debra would like to become a member of AMSC because she owns Schnauzers, loves the breed, and wants to support the preservation of the breed. She agrees to comply with and support both the Code of Ethics and the Breed Standard. She is involved with Conformation and attends approximately eight events per year. Two litters have resulted from her breeding. Debra is a retired teacher and is interested in Legislative issues as well as health. She has purchased her schnauzers from the Mendelsohn kennel.

One finished it's Silver Championship and their puppy is starting his show career.

**Sponsors:** Leslie Mendelsohn, Terri Houck

### Margene Scheerer

P.O. Box 477, 65 N. 200 East St.  
Kamas, UT 84036  
Alpen Miniature Schnauzers  
[ms203@humboldt.edu](mailto:ms203@humboldt.edu)

Margene would like to become a member of AMSC to continue her education with a group that is committed to Miniature Schnauzers. She has read and agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics and Breed Standard. She currently owns two Minis and has bred four litters in the past five years. Margene exhibits in Conformation, Tracking and Barn Hunt. She is a member of the Northern California Mini Schnauzer Club. As a former educator her special skills can be helpful by outreach and networking. Her occupation is RN.

**Sponsors:** Patricia Hartzell, Doug Crowe

### Shantel Julius Rischette

18550 Polk Ave  
Hastings, MN 55033  
507-820-2455  
[Shantel.julius@gmail.com](mailto:Shantel.julius@gmail.com)

Shantel would like to join AMSC to better represent the breed. She has read and agrees to abide by both the Breed Standard and the Code of Ethics. She owns three Standard Schnauzer, two are AKC and one is PAL registered. She also owns two AKC registered Miniature Schnauzers. She does not consider herself a breeder, but is involved in Conformation, Agility, Scent work, Rally and Barn Hunt. Shantel attends roughly twenty-four dog events per year. She is a member of Twin Cities Mini Schnauzer Club, Heartland Standard Schnauzer Club of Greater Twin Cities and Standard Schnauzer Club of America. As a veterinarian specializing in rehab, chiropractor, acupuncture she is very interested in the overall health of the dog and extending the quality of their lives as long as possible. She can offer assistance in education especially in sports medicine.

**Sponsors:** Naomi Houle, Donna Bonnicksen

### Patricia Pierre

1509 Enterprise Rd  
Bowie, MD 20721  
646-522-8352  
[PatriciaFPierre@aol.com](mailto:PatriciaFPierre@aol.com)

Patricia would like to join AMSC to help support the club and to learn more about the Miniature Schnauzer so she can knowledgably promote and advocate for the correct breed standard. She has read and agrees to abide by the Breed Standard and Code of Ethics. She would like to connect with other breed enthusiasts. She is not a breeder and has received all of her dogs from respective breeders. Patricia is involved in Conformation, Agility, Obedience, Dock Diving and Barn Hunt.

She attends approximately 60 events per year. She is a member of Oriole Dog Training Club (Chair) and Black Russian Terrier Club of America (Health committee, National Specialty 2022). She checked all the boxes for activities she is willing to volunteer for. Patricia is a Mathematician and Senior level Healthcare data analyst and researcher.

**Sponsors:** Barbara Donahue, Shawne Imler

### Connie Krohn

P.O. Box 117  
Vonda, Saskatoon S0K 4N0  
306-514-2349  
[canineartistry@gmail.com](mailto:canineartistry@gmail.com)

Connie would like to become a member to connect with a community of Miniature Schnauzer breeders/lovers and keep abreast of issues in the breed. She is a Breeder and has bred one litter in the past five years. Connie is a member of Canadian Kennel Club and Canadian Professional Handlers Association. She attends approximately thirty weekends of shows per year. Connie is also an outstanding artist. Her first Miniature Schnauzer was purchased from Kate McMillan approximately thirty years ago and have always had at least two in her house since.

**Sponsors:** Carol Henning, Jackie Harris



### Vickie Boechler

13 Brookwood PL.  
Spruce Grove AB T7X 1H4  
780-962-0679  
[Vickieboechler06@gmail.com](mailto:Vickieboechler06@gmail.com)

Vickie has taken an active role in the development of Miniature Schnauzers since 2014 when she attended her first dog show to watch Kate McMillan show a dog they co-own. She has since then learned to strip, groom and show her dogs. She states that AMSC is part of the MS world and she should have applied sooner. She agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics and Breed Standard. Vickie co-owns dogs with Kate that are AKC & CKC registered. In the past five years her stud dogs have produced six litters and she has whelped two litters. She is Vice-President of the Miniature Schnauzer Club of Canada.

Skills are Program Planning, Evaluation, Computer Skills + + +, Chairing Meetings, Project Management, Research, excellent writing skills and Educator.

**Sponsors:** Kate McMillan, Krystal Mason

### Kevin E Holmes

4439 John Draper Rd.  
Smithsburg, MD 21783  
202-440-2225  
[Kevin.e.holmes@me.com](mailto:Kevin.e.holmes@me.com)

Kevin feels it is time to join AMSC because of his involvement in Miniature Schnauzers. He imported his first Mini from Spain in 2018. 2019 he imported a bitch from France and she was shown to her AKC Championship. Last year he had his first litter of Minis that produced his first bred by champion. He has read the Code of Ethics and Breed Standard and agrees to abide by them. He is a breeder and has produced 12 litters over the past five years. Kevin is involved in Conformation, Agility, Obedience, Stewarding and breeding. He attends approximately 50 dog events per year. Clubs he belongs to: Standard Schnauzer Club of America (current treasurer), Arizona White Mountain KC (past President), Affenpinscher Club of America (current Recording Secretary), German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America, Pincher-Schnauzer Club of Germany, Mid-Atlantic Stewards Association, Eastern Stewards Club, Inc and New Mexico Stewards Association. He states that Minis, even though a lot of grooming, are the breed for him. Kevin states that he is "over educated" with two Master's Degrees, three Bachelor's Degrees, among many other accomplishments.

**Sponsors:** Andrew Deer, Shawne Imler



Carla Borrelli, Editor  
1799 South Creek Road  
Derby, NY 14047-9729

PERSONALITY....from p. 2

**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE:** The following information is given to help conduct AMSC business, Please remember that the Secretary and AMSCOpe editor should BOTH be notified of address chnges.

**PRESIDENT**

Vicki Kubic  
523 River Terrace  
Endicott, NY 13760  
Phone: 607-725-3662  
vickikubic@aol.com

**SECRETARY**

Sara Mathies  
37332 County 56 Blvd,  
Cannon Falls, MN 55009-5539  
Phone: 952-239-1001  
Email: Secretary@AMSC.us

**TREASURER**

Bonnie Keyes  
511 River Terrace  
Endicott, NY 13760  
treasurerer@amsc.US  
Phone: 607-742-3828

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Patricia Obrien  
273 Mableann Lane  
Merlin, OR 97523  
Phone: 916-662-5278  
Emerald\_Isle\_95661@yahoo.com

**AMSCOPE**

Carla Borrelli  
1799 South Creek Road  
Derby, NY 14047  
Phone: 716-572-7010  
cborr@aol.com

**MEMBERSIP**

Debbie Herrell  
13445 Phal Road  
Grass Lake, MI 49240  
Phone: 517-522-4173  
sercatep@yahoo.com

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AMSC home page: <http://akc.org/akc/>

