



A Health Threat

Lawn Chemicals & Cancer in Dogs

Clover, adopted in 2018, enjoys the grass at SAS. To protect our dogs, we stopped using any lawn chemicals or pesticides in 2014.

The bad news: “Cancer is becoming more common in dogs and these cancers are also occurring at younger ages,” says Dr. Barbara Hodges of the Humane Society

Veterinary Medical Association. The good news: one major source of canine cancer risk is entirely avoidable--if pet parents are willing to stop using lawn chemicals.

The evidence is now overwhelming: many chemicals commonly used by homeowners or gardeners in search of weed-free lawns have been implicated in a markedly increased risk of fatal cancers in dogs. A 1991 study first revealed the link, finding that dogs who lived in homes where the most commonly used lawn chemicals were applied developed cancer at a rate up to 200% higher than dogs who did not. Additional studies have confirmed the troubling link, including a 6-year study by Tufts University that found a 70% elevated risk of fatal lymphomas in dogs residing in homes with professionally treated lawns, even when the dogs were kept completely off of the newly treated grass for the recommended 48 hours after application (it is worth noting that the Environmental Protection Agency notes that a portion of sprayed lawn chemicals become airborne or remain well beyond the 48 hour mark).



To add to the concern, the Tufts Study revealed that dogs whose owners did not spray their lawns, but instead simply spot-treated their gardens with pesticides or herbicides such as Round Up--or used insecticides inside the home--were also much more likely to develop fatal lymphomas than dogs whose owners used organic methods.

The bottom line recommendation from one of the study researchers is unequivocal: “Dog owners should not use pesticides on their lawns or allow lawn-service providers to use them, nor should they allow dogs to play or walk on lawns if they are unsure whether or not that lawn has been treated with chemicals.”

Grass & ticks:

A recent study conducted by the USDA in Massachusetts showed that mowing every *other* week (not weekly as previously recommended) was frequent enough to keep ticks at bay.



Boxers like 2018 resident Cookie, right, are genetically at greater risk for lymphoma