

Is man's best friend the key to battling cancer? New study aims to find out

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A new joint study by UC Davis, the University of Wisconsin and Colorado State University is looking for healthy canines to participate in

a study that may benefit man and man's best friend alike.

According to Dr. Jenna Burton, Associate Professor of Clinical Oncology at UC Davis, the Vaccination Against Canine Cancer Study (VACCS) began in May and currently has 30 [dogs](#) enrolled at the Davis site, with 190 total across the three universities.

Burton says that Davis is hoping for 275 pets to participate in the five-year study, which is being supported by the Open Philanthropy Project from Dr. Stefan Johnson of Arizona State University.

"This is a study that is being conducted for a cancer preventive vaccine that has never been done before. We're not just focusing on one type of cancer, but to see if the immune system can be geared to prevent several types of cancer," Burton said.

The study would aim to aid the [immune system](#) in recognizing abnormal proteins earlier. According to Burton, there are a number of tumor types that develop in cats and dogs that are similar to those in humans. She says that the study is a two-way street, which could benefit canines and humans alike. Burton says that some studies estimate that as high as 50% of dogs over the age of 10 are diagnosed with cancer.

"Just like humans, dogs are living longer and are developing [cancer](#) in greater numbers. Immunotherapy is an exploding field, and dogs can be very helpful in that regard," Burton said. "We can learn a lot from the amazing work being done and [veterinary oncology](#) can help a lot with that. Pets live in the same environment as us. They drink the same water and breathe the same air."

Dogs involved in the study must meet a list of criteria and would undergo a number of screenings and examinations. Participating canines must be between 6 and 10 years old, of mixed breed, live within 150

miles of UC Davis, have had a veterinary visit within the past 12 months and have three years of previous medical history available, amongst other criteria.

According to Burton, a number of participants will be chosen at random to receive placebo vaccines. A financial incentive is offered to cover veterinary visits for dogs participating in the study.

To find out if your dog is eligible, visit the [UC Davis Veterinary Center for Clinical Trials](#) website.

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