

# Family's dog fights lymphoma; chemo available to treat pets

EMPORIA (AP) — Harvey was scheduled to have another round of intravenous chemotherapy treatment. A reaction to medication prompted his doctor to switch to an oral dose to fight the boxer's lymphoma.

"Animals do get cancer, just like people, and a lot of people don't realize it," said veterinarian Duane Henrikson, who is treating Harvey at the Emporia Veterinary Hospital. "They're really surprised."

Harvey's family, Sandy Wickham and her husband Kim, had been stunned by the boxer's diagnosis, which came shortly before Christmas.

“We found out on a Tuesday and we started treatment the next day,” Sandy Wickham said. “It was a very easy decision now that we have it here in town.”

Harvey is as precious to the Wickhams as he was worthless to his previous owners. He is the Wickhams' third "throw-away dog," Sandy Wickham explained, as she talked about Harvey.

A variety of chemotherapy drugs are available to treat the family pet.

Like many other “throw-away dogs,” Harvey came from a dog

pound. His luck in being found by the Wickhams has given him over five years of luxury and the opportunity to enjoy more time with them, if treatment is successful.

"K-State had a couple of oncologists on board five or six years ago," Henrikson said, mentioning the veterinary teaching hospital at Kansas State University in Manhattan. "I got interested in working with them, attended seminars about chemotherapy and diagnosis."

Chemotherapy, however, is not a panacea in the animal world any more than it is for humans, he said. Surgery continues to be the best option for some types of cancer, like breast cancer, and others may require radiation therapy, which is not done at the hospital.

Diagnosis and prognosis combine to indicate the best course for each case. Henrikson said that some cases are diagnosed and treated in Emporia. Others may need to be sent to K-State, which is better equipped to determine whether the cancer has metastasized, what stage the cancer is in, and what chemotherapy routine would be appropriate.

"A lot of them, we will follow up

with the chemotherapy here in Emporia and monitor it with blood chemistries and blood counts and response," he said. "...There's been quite a few animals that have gone through various treatments."

"Some cancers respond much better to chemotherapy ...," he said. "Is the treatment worse than the disease? Can we expect one month of additional life span or a year and a half? All those kinds of things come into play."

Harvey, at approximately 6 years

old, is young enough to warrant trying to save and, if the odds are with him, chemotherapy could buy him another year and a half to two years of a comfortable life. One dog who underwent the same treatment managed to stretch his life span to four years, Wickham said.

"So, we wanted to do what we could," she said. "It would have been different if he'd been 10 or 12 years old. ..."

Wickham said that Harvey already has lived longer than Hen-

drikson's minimum estimate.

Harvey's first tumor was about the size of a golf ball, and it showed up rather quickly on the lean boxer's collarbone. Many small round growths are only fatty cysts, Henrikson said, and are aspirated with a needle to draw cells to check in the laboratory.

Harvey's initial biopsy came back negative, but the follow-up biopsy showed cancer and treatment began. The tumor disappeared quickly. Almost as quickly, how-

ever, lumps showed up under his chin. Harvey will continue his 26 weeks of treatment — one per week the first four weeks, one week off, one per week the second four weeks, then every-other week until the regimen is completed Wickham said.

Harvey has many reasons to live, and the family said they are hoping he will. For now, though, it is a matter of waiting.

"We just kind of go week to week," Wickham said.

# Spouse has problems with home buyers

Dear Dr. Brothers: My wife is driving me nuts. Every two years or so, she decides that she hates our house and always has, and now we must put it on the market and move somewhere else. Well, we've done this twice and the house hasn't sold because she is very stubborn about the price, the repairs, etc. She actually alienates the potential buyers. Now she wants to sell again. What is the matter with her, in your opinion? — L.W.

Dear L.W.: Your wife sounds very conflicted. Although home buying and selling is always a stressful series of events, if people are really motivated and at least somewhat reasonable, they will try very hard to make the deals work. In your wife's case, she is motivated to put the house on the market, but it doesn't sound like she really wants to move. Do you have a real estate agent? If you have been trying to sell the home yourself, I highly recommend putting it in the hands of a professional who can do the negotiating for you and your wife. This way, there will be less chance of personalities entering into the equation when it comes time to settle on a price and terms.

But before you go through all this again, perhaps you should sit down with your wife and see if something else is really bothering her. Why does she “hate” the house? That’s a strong emotion. Could it be that there is something else about her life that she would like to change, and the place you live is just the easiest thing to latch on to? It sounds like you’ve been patient, but now is the time to dig a little deeper to find out what’s up with her. Just be prepared for anything — your wife might want to distance herself from you, not just her house. On the other hand, a new kitchen might be all she really wants!

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Dear Dr. Brothers: I have a young child who is almost ready to send to nursery school. I know from how she plays that she is a free spirit and needs to go at her own speed rather than sit in a circle or be bogged down with lots of input. Yet the other moms I have met are all into flashcards, computers, toys that talk and teach, and so forth. We are more into clay, finger paints and nature walks. Is it wrong to want her to do her own thing? — C.Z.

Dear C.Z.: It is great that you know your child so well. Many parents who are busy with work or personal things don't have a clear idea of who their children are, what their learning styles consist of or what kind of program would be best for their education. Then these same parents wonder why things aren't going so well at nursery school! I think you have some options. You could form a play group of like-minded parents and kids to supplement whatever each of you decides to do more formally for the children. You could homeschool her and tailor the curriculum and pace of things to suit her. You could choose a Montessori school, which doesn't test or grade and lets kids choose their own activities.

A recent small study comparing some Montessori students with non-Montessori students in



## Dr. Joyce Brothers

- Ask

Dr. Brothers

**Milwaukee showed that many of the 5-year-old Montessori kids scored higher in math, reading and social development than their public-school peers, and the 12-year-old Montessori kids also outscored their peers in social and behavioral development. While this isn't conclusive, it might give parents like you, who are worried about competitiveness in school, a chance to let their children ease into the situation.**

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Dear Dr. Brothers: I am engaged to be married next year. My guy and I are in our mid-30s, and we are both used to living alone and doing more or less what we want. He's great, except that he seems to be overly interested in shopping. He spends more time at the mall than I do, and he always seems to be coming up with more and more stuff that he "needs." If I suggest doing something else on a date other than looking at home furnishings, he sulks. We each already have an apartment full of stuff. Is this going to be a problem? — K.C.

**Dear K.C.:** Whether your fiancée's shopping behavior becomes a problem is really a matter of how it impacts his life—and, of course, your upcoming marriage. Like many habits that get out of hand, or any number of compulsive behaviors, there certainly is a chance that being a shopoholic could lead to trouble. The most obvious factor to consider is whether he is spending so much money that he can't pay for his purchases. Sometimes when a person is buying only for himself and has plenty of money to play with, he seems to be going overboard. So the first thing you need to do is have a financial discussion and see if the two of you can agree on a budget, with savings coming before unbridled discretionary spending. His reaction to this concept should tell you a lot.

It might come as a surprise to you that shopping till you drop is not exclusively a female thing. Men can have the same problem with this type of behavior and feel powerless to stop. So it is well worth your while to probe into his feelings about buying things before you tie the knot. You don't want to be driven into debt or dragged into a maelstrom of mounting debt as you start your marriage. Find out now if he needs help.

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