



Photo credit: Jo Van Kampen /
The Kennel Club ©

I am writing to you on behalf of the staff at the Animal Health Trust (AHT). Their letter below informs Golden Retriever owners of important research investigating cancer in the breed and how they can contribute.

The Kennel Club strongly encourages you to contribute to this project because the information that it generates will be of great value to the breed.

If you have any questions about taking part in the study, please contact **Victoria Pilfold-Wilkie** by **E-mail** to tooncologyres@aht.org.uk or by telephoning **01638 751000 Ext. 1214**.

Kind regards,

Bonnie-Marie Abhayaratne
Health and Breeder Research Assistant
The Kennel Club
www.thekennelclub.org.uk



The [Animal Health Trust \(AHT\)](#) in Newmarket would like to invite you to take part in a study being carried out on a cancer of the eye that affects Golden Retrievers. You have been sent this letter by the Kennel Club, on behalf of the AHT, because you are the registered owner of a Golden Retriever. However, please note that the fact that you have been sent this letter in no way implies that we believe your dog will become affected by uveal melanoma. We sincerely hope that you will be able to participate in the study as it may help future generations of dogs. However, if you have already contributed to our study thank you for your help.

At the AHT we are undertaking research that is seeking to address the issue that pedigree dogs develop cancer more frequently than people. We hope that this research will eventually lead to both a reduction in the numbers of dogs affected by common cancers, and the development of new treatments for these cancers.

We would like your help with a research study that is attempting to identify inherited 'genetic alterations' that cause Golden Retrievers to have a higher risk of developing uveal melanoma than most other pedigree dog breeds. Uveal melanoma is the most common cancer of the eye in dogs and affects all breeds, although several breeds (including Golden Retrievers) appear to be more susceptible. In the long term, we hope that the research will lead to the development of a 'DNA test' to identify Golden Retrievers that carry the genetic alterations that cause the increased risk. Such a test will be invaluable for vets as it will identify dogs who may benefit from careful monitoring for early detection of cancer (enabling early treatment), and it will also help breeders to reduce the incidence of Golden Retrievers affected by uveal melanoma. Significantly, the research will increase understanding of how uveal melanoma develops, promoting the development of new therapies.

Please could you help us with our studies?

Taking part is easy.

If your dog has been affected by uveal melanoma, or is at least 7 years of age and has never been affected by any type of cancer, we would like to hear from you.

Simply **E-mail** oncologyres@aht.org.uk, or **telephone 01638 751000 Ext. 1214**, to request a cheek swab kit. Each kit is supplied with x 3 swabs, full instructions, a sample submission form and a reply envelope. Unfortunately, as a charity we are unable to pay for the swabs to be returned to us, but a 'large letter' first class or second class stamp will cover the return postage. If your dog is currently affected by either a mast cell tumour or a uveal melanoma we will also ask you if it is possible for you to ask your vet to retain (in a special preservative that we will provide) for our research a small piece of any tumour biopsy that is surgically removed.

The more samples that we receive the more likely it is that we will be able to identify inherited genetic alterations that cause Golden Retrievers to have a higher risk of developing uveal melanoma. If you submit a sample, all information relating to you and your dog will remain strictly confidential.

If you have any questions about taking part in the study, please contact **Victoria Pilfold-Wilkie by E-mail** to oncologyres@aht.org.uk or by telephoning **01638 751000 Ext. 1214**. Further information about the work that we do at the Animal Health Trust can be found on our website at www.aht.org.uk.

Yours Faithfully



Dr Mike Starkey
Molecular Oncology Research Group Leader



Victoria Pilfold-Wilkie
Sample and Data Curator