



**one in every two dogs** will be diagnosed with The Big C these days.

Does anyone remember a relaxing Sunday in the Park with George? We could recline in the tall, soft grass, look up at the sky and savor the moment. No doubt, a flea or two or three would hitch a ride, but it wasn't a really big deal. Fido and Fluffy somehow managed to avoid Typhus, Bubonic Plague and Tularemia, and cope without routine trips to the vet for tubes of toxins, antihistamines, steroids, medicated shampoos and antibiotics. We could still enjoy such an outing now, save for the tiny colored flags ringing the park's perimeter and the small-print signs posted in the parking lot declaring what chemical was used to kill the evil dandelions and ants, and when – that is, if we are fortunate enough to live in an area that has laws enforcing such disclosure.

Then there's the simple walk in the neighborhood. Unless you are lucky enough to live in exurbia, I can guarantee you and your dog will come in contact with potentially lethal commercial lawn chemicals. In man's efforts to create a virtually insect- and weed-free world, he has turned to science and Big Pharma for help. He has showered his lawn and garden with spray cocktails of multiple chemicals, including organophosphates, a class of "icides" that the EPA has FINALLY labeled carcinogenic, neurotoxic and mutagenic. As a matter of fact, just this past September, the state of California has announced, much to its manufacturer's chagrin that it will declare on the labels that the Roundup product causes cancer. YAY, a small victory for the Earth and all its creatures. Maybe our beloved bees will buzz again!! Until then, we either wrap our dogs in protective body armor, or we let them get their nature on AND minimize the harm with simple foot baths (and maybe "undercarriage" rinses) when we get back home.

Moving inside, man has treated his living space with sprays, foggers and pet topicals that leave hazardous residues on our furniture, carpets, draperies, linens, clothing, unsealed foodstuffs and skin, yep, even our skin, the largest organ of the body. And to what effect? More and more studies are now revealing that these chemicals have caused great harm to our pets, sometimes with fatal consequences. In April of 2013, the EPA issued an advisory for "spot on" pesticides applied at the neck nape areas of dogs because of the sizable increase in reported adverse incidents between 2007 and 2008, from 28,000 to 44,000 including 600 deaths. The EPA's report in 2010 revealed most adverse reactions involving the skin, gastrointestinal tract and central nervous system, occurred in small young dogs under three years old, but were also found to affect giant breed dogs, and older dogs. (My dog Dakota can attest to that. Now almost eight years old, I rescued this Great Dane mix from Utah's red rock desert at the tender age of seven months. He had never known fleas. Yet almost immediately upon coming to my southern California home, we all became well acquainted. I reluctantly heeded Dakota's then-veterinarian's advice to apply a spot on. Within two hours of application, a tomato-red line of irritation formed from Dakota's neck along the spine, all the way down to his mid-section. I watched in horror as Dakota first panted heavily, then paced and drooled, and the fur on his back began to fall out in tufts. Needless to say, I reported the reaction, bathed Dakota three times, called his veterinarian, and had to suppress the urge to scream, "Ya think?!?" into the phone when he advised me to "remove the substance and pursue other courses of flea treatment from now on." Duly noted. Thanks, Doc.) That should have been enough to get us to stop this madness, but the real wake-up call came in late 2013, when the FDA reported that organophosphates have been linked to various human learning disorders and decreased IQ levels. Hopefully now we'll pay more attention, and change our ways.

Until that time, maybe it's a good idea to turn to our Mother for help. After all, she has sustained us for millennia, and there is no wiser, more compassionate and effective healer than Nature herself.

Let's build strong dogs from the inside out. Let's feed them quality meals, full of fruits and vegetable grown in microbe-rich soil, with meat from animals who actually walked on grass, felt the nurturing warmth of the sun, and ate biologically appropriate food devoid of added hormones and other chemicals. Let's sprinkle their bowls with immune-boosting, healing grasses and herbs like alfalfa, dandelion, milk thistle and red clover that not only taste good, but assist our dogs' bodies in eliminating pesticides and increase their resistance to dreaded diseases. (In so doing, we can also ensure they get a safe supply of grazing material!)

Let's stimulate their "smellers" with delightful organic essential oils that also act as natural pest repellants and mental/emotional stress relievers. And when their skin could use some soothing, let's calm things down with aromatic herbal salves and spritzers.

These simple, harmless, yet effective methods can build healthy pets. And what's more, it is my hope (and prayer!) that, when more people see the results of such efforts, we create a paradigm shift that may just stop the doomsday clock, and bring us back toward Eden, where we live in peace and harmony with the Earth, our planet, our home.



About Dr. Reema Sayegh:

Dr, Reema Sayegh has a Ph.D. in holistic nutrition and doctor of naturopathy degree, and has enjoyed an extensive career in the wellness field. After she met, and rescued, a nine-year old Great Dane named Zeus in 2004, Dr. Reema was inspired to "shift gears" and has since become a Reiki master teacher, certified holistic pet consultant, published author, public speaker, and animal welfare advocate. She works in tandem with holistic veterinarians and their clients to provide their companion animals with supplemental natural wellness modalities, and specialty geriatric and hospice care. Dr. Reema lives in southern California with her husband and the love of their lives: a spirited canine teacher, healer, and fun-loving goofball named Dakota.