

Cancer Patients Worry About Losing Their Pets

The cost of caring for pets can be a big challenge, finds a survey by CancerCare's Pet Assistance & Wellness Program.

June 10, 2024 By [Trent Straube](#)

We humans love our pets. Many of us consider them our best friends or close family members as well as a consistent source of support. Sadly, many people with cancer risk giving up their pets, mostly because of the costs associated with keeping them.

In fact, 87% of surveyed cancer patients with pets reported having trouble taking care of their pets because of the expense. And nearly half (44%) said they worried they might not be able to keep their pet. Some respondents (15%) valued their pets so much that they considered ending or pausing cancer treatment in order to keep them.

The survey was conducted by [CancerCare's Pet Assistance & Wellness \(PAW\) Program](#), which helps folks diagnosed with cancer keep their beloved pets. The PAW Program offers financial assistance as well as low-cost and free pet care services.

Other survey respondents faced different challenges caring for their pets, often stemming from cancer treatment side effects. For example, 67% had trouble maintaining pet care because they couldn't walk, lift or bend down; 59% reported challenges walking their dog; and 86% needed help specifically to care for pets.

Although 92% of respondents reflected that their pet was extremely important throughout their cancer diagnosis, many also said the financial burden could be overwhelming. "Vet expenses are hard when paying for all the 'extras' that come along with cancer (e.g., vitamins, OTC creams, protein drinks)," CancerCare client Rob said.

He's not alone. Over three quarters (77%) of survey respondents said they found it difficult or impossible to manage the cost of pet food, and 78% said the same about visits to the vet. (Over

90% of these individuals said they did not experience financial problems regarding pet care before they were diagnosed with cancer.)

“If it was not for my grant from CancerCare for Angel, I do not know if I would have been able to keep her,” Karen, a client of the program, shared in the report on the survey. “I am so blessed to have her. She is my rock that keeps me fighting for my life. I have now lived four years longer than was thought, and I owe a lot to Angel for being there for me.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/cancer-patients-worry-losing-pets-animals>