



Research to **protect, treat & cure** animals.
100% of donations fund animal health.

Morris Animal Foundation fights a fatal blood disorder

Autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA), also known as immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA), is a serious, often fatal disease in which a dog's immune system destroys the dog's red blood cells. More than half of dogs diagnosed with this disease will die, many within weeks of diagnosis. Thanks to Meisha's Hope AIHA/IMHA Fund #338 at Morris Animal Foundation, we are learning more about this disease and how to prevent and treat it.

- Meisha's Hope has raised more than \$150,000 toward research into AIHA/IMHA.
- In 2008, MAF is funding three studies related to IMHA, including a clinical trial that is testing a drug that may block red blood cell destruction.
- Thanks to past MAF funding, veterinarians may soon have a tool to identify dogs with high risk for developing abnormal blood clots, which have been linked to AIHA/IMHA. In a recently completed MAF-funded study, researchers began developing clinical tests that would detect activated platelets in a dog's blood. When activated too much, these platelets can lead to fatal clots. Once developed, veterinarians could use these tests to identify high-risk dogs and begin treating them before they develop life-threatening problems.
- Dogs with this blood disorder often die before traditional treatment can help the dog's immune system control the disease. An MAF-funded study tested a novel drug treatment, called liposomal clodronate, which appears safe and effective in stopping the destruction of red blood cells in an affected dog. If this drug works well in a clinical trial, it will give dogs with acute IMHA the ability to stave off the disease until conventional treatment begins working.
- Treating AIHA/IMHA is complex, and MAF-funded scientists discovered some of the early information about the role that blood clotting plays in causing death in affected dogs. By determining the need for veterinarians to control blood clotting, this study provided invaluable insight into further areas of study.