



GOLDEN RETRIEVER  
LIFETIME STUDY

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# Veterinarian Manual



**GOLDEN RETRIEVER**  
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## Welcome

Dear Veterinarian,

Welcome to Morris Animal Foundation's Golden Retriever Lifetime Study!

Morris Animal Foundation is a nonprofit organization that, in collaboration with scientists, veterinarians and dog owners, is working to advance veterinary medicine so dogs can live longer, healthier lives. The Golden Retriever Lifetime Study is a groundbreaking effort to identify genetic, nutritional and environmental risk factors for cancer and other health problems in dogs. It is the largest and longest observational study ever undertaken for dogs in the United States. We are pleased you are helping your client participate in this study. Veterinarians play a critical role in the success of the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study.

This manual is provided to guide you through your role in this study. The health information you provide for your client's dog is submitted online. You can print completed hard copies of the forms and file them with your client's records.

Please use the study website as your first resource when you have questions: **[morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org)**. From the homepage, click on the GRLS icon in the upper right corner, and scroll down to log in. Alternatively, if you have bookmarked the study login page, your bookmark will still work.

If you need further assistance, please email the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Team at **[grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org)** or call us toll-free at 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647).

Thank you, and once again, welcome to the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study!

*The Morris Animal Foundation Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Team*  
**The Morris Animal Foundation Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Team**

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## Study Team Contact Information

Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Team: Customer Service  
**[morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org) | [grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org) | 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647)**

Morris Animal Foundation  
720 S. Colorado Blvd, Suite 174A, Denver, CO 80246 | 800.243.2345 | **[morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org)**

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## Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Description

More than half of golden retrievers die of cancer, and cancer is a leading cause of death in all dogs older than 2 years of age. With the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study, Morris Animal Foundation's goal is to better define the incidence and risk factors for cancer and other major medical conditions in golden retrievers. By following the lives of 3,000+ golden retrievers, we will be able to create a brighter future for all dogs.

### Study Objectives

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The objectives of this study are to:

- Determine the occurrence of cancer in a cohort of 3,000+ golden retrievers in the contiguous United States
- Determine the incidence and prevalence of exposure to potential environmental, nutritional, behavioral and genetic risk factors among golden retrievers
- Explore associations between potential risk factors and the development of specific cancers, including hemangiosarcoma, lymphoma, mast cell tumors and osteosarcoma
- Determine the incidence and risk factors for other major health disorders in golden retrievers, such as hypothyroidism, heart disease and arthritis
- Collect, store and analyze blood, DNA and other biological samples to identify potential biomarkers for the development of cancer and other diseases
- Collect and store tumor tissue samples to confirm diagnosis of cancer and to characterize cancer pathogenesis at a molecular level
- Develop and evaluate strategies and guidelines for canine cancer screening and prevention

## Your Role as a Selected Veterinarian

By supporting your client in this project, you are making a commitment to participate in the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study. If at any time you are unable or unwilling to perform the tasks required for this study, your client will be asked to select another veterinarian to perform the dog's annual study examinations and collect samples for the study. If you are ever concerned about your ability to continue participation, we want to hear from you. Please contact the study team at [grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org) or 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647).

### Annual Veterinary Visits

Each year that your patient is enrolled in the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study, your client will schedule a visit for a comprehensive health examination and sample collection. You can use the appointment tab on each patient's online chart to view the exam due dates and questionnaire completion status.

My Patient - Spot (Dog ID #: 094-035007)

Year	Scheduled Visit Date	Actual Visit Date	Due Date	Lab Received	Owner Status	Veterinarian Status
5			11/01/2017	Not Received	Not Started	Not Started
4		10/18/2016	11/01/2016	Not Received	Complete	Incomplete
3		11/23/2015	11/01/2015	11/24/2015	Complete	Complete

You will be required to perform a complete physical examination on your patient and collect samples (blood, urine, feces, hair and toenail clippings) at each annual veterinary visit. Additional time should be allotted for these visits to complete the examination, review any medical history provided by the owner, perform the required sample collection procedures, and enter your findings into the online veterinary questionnaire. A veterinary sample kit containing detailed instructions, sample collection supplies, and shipping supplies will be sent directly to your client before the scheduled visit each year. Your client will drop the kit off at your clinic a few days before the appointment or bring the kit to the appointment.

Annual laboratory test results (SUPERchem, CBC, T4, urinalysis, heartworm antigen, ova and parasite fecal analysis) will be reported to you from ANTECH Diagnostics at no charge. Each dog's laboratory results will be automatically uploaded to your study account two to three business days after the exam. It is your responsibility to review these results with your client. You can provide a copy of these results directly to your client by clicking the "share" button next to each laboratory report. If you require assistance locating, printing or sharing these results, please contact the study team at [grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org).

## My Patient - Spot (Dog ID #: 094-035007)

According to state law and accepted standards of practice, laboratory results must be interpreted within the context of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship. A veterinarian-client-patient relationship cannot be established solely by telephonic or other electronic means. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the attending veterinarian to share and interpret these results with their client.

### Laboratory Results

Accession #	Order Date	Lab Type	View	Download	Share
MEEA51714203	11/24/2015	A03	View	Download	Share
MEEA43429804	10/03/2014	A02	View	Download	Share
MEEA35919031	10/18/2013	A01	View	Download	Share
MECT08638938	11/02/2012	A00	View	Download	Share

To print results, click the Download button.

Click the Share button to share a lab with the patient's owner.

You also are required to log on to the study website and enter history and physical examination findings for your study patient. A hard copy of the veterinary questionnaire is provided in the annual kit. Veterinarians are permitted and encouraged to complete the paperwork during the examination and delegate online data entry to clinic staff.

Your client is responsible for all costs associated with the annual examination, sample collection and laboratory tests. Your client will receive limited compensation of up to \$75 from Morris Animal Foundation to help offset costs of the annual physical examination and sample collection. What you charge your client for study-related visits, including examination fees and laboratory test fees (phlebotomy, handling, interpretation, etc.), is at your discretion. Please review all financial responsibilities with your client and follow your clinic's normal billing protocols. These financial responsibilities also are outlined in your client's study materials.

### Tips for Participating Veterinarians

- As soon as possible after the annual study examination and sample collection, please complete the veterinary questionnaire for your patient. (On the [morrisonanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisonanimalfoundation.org) homepage, click on the GRLS study icon in the upper right corner, and scroll down to log in). Timely questionnaire completion helps our study team stay up-to-date on study operations.
- We've found that writing your login username and password in each study patient's chart can make the login process quicker.
- For the annual questionnaire, you'll need to report on all medications dispensed and vaccines given over the previous 12 months. You'll also be reporting on any new health event. If your software system does not show problem lists, medications and vaccines separately, consider maintaining an annual list for each category within the patient chart for easy review. Remember that you'll need the vaccine manufacturer and lot number.
- A hard copy of the veterinary questionnaire is included in each kit. Some of our study veterinarians find it useful to have on hand during the study visit.
- A hard copy of the veterinary diagnosis list also is included in each kit. Use this table to see what diagnoses are available in each drop-down menu.
- Don't forget that anyone can enter the annual exam data - a knowledgeable staff member can input any information online from the completed hard copy questionnaire or from your medical records.
- Many of our study veterinarians find that adding extra time on the day of the study for completing their questionnaire is a good way of getting all their study requirements done quickly.
- You can skip a question by using the table of contents on the right side of the screen (instead of clicking next, which requires the current page to be complete).



## Tumor Sample Collection

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Tissue samples are essential for the study. If you suspect that your patient has a malignant cancer, we ask that you (or a veterinary oncologist or other veterinary specialist) take a biopsy of the suspected tumor for examination by an ANTECH Diagnostics veterinary pathologist. Initial evaluation with fine needle aspirate, clinical pathology, and/or diagnostic imaging is recommended whenever possible. Please use the **Biopsy Decision Tree** to help you decide if a biopsy should be submitted through the study. If a biopsy does not meet the criteria to be submitted through the study, please proceed with best clinical practices. However, if the result is malignant or unusual, notify the study team so we may discuss additional sampling as appropriate.

The most up-to-date tumor sampling instructions are available at **Biopsy Kit: Collection and Shipping Instructions** or from the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS. Every odd-numbered study year (example – years 3, 5, 7, etc.), a Biopsy Kit will be included with the annual kit shipped to your client. This on-hand Biopsy Kit should be kept at your clinic for use whenever you biopsy a suspected malignancy. If additional Biopsy Kits are needed, please request one using our **online form** or contact the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647). Please note that kits shipped directly to the client do not contain formalin. When using these kits, we request that you use formalin jars from your clinic.

A full set of clinical pathology samples, similar to the annual study exam, are submitted at the time of biopsy. This includes blood, urine, feces, hair, and nail samples and does NOT replace the dog's annual sample submission. Results of the clinical pathology tests and histopathology are provided to you at no charge from ANTECH Diagnostics, a Platinum Partner of the study, and will be uploaded to the registered study veterinarian's home page within 3–5 business days. It is the study veterinarian's responsibility to review these findings with the owner.

If malignancy is confirmed via biopsy, please complete an Additional Veterinary Visit (AVV) questionnaire online to record physical examination findings and summarize the diagnosis. No AVV is needed if biopsy results are benign.

The Golden Retriever Lifetime Study provides the owner with limited reimbursement (maximum of \$500 for the life of the dog) for the costs associated with histopathology (tumor sample collection and analysis). But, as always, what you charge your client for any study-related visit is at your discretion.

Visit for an **Overview of Biopsy Procedures**.

## Additional Veterinary Visits (AVV)

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You must notify the study team any time a dog is diagnosed with malignancy. We require notification of the four primary cancers being studied (hemangiosarcoma, lymphoma, mast cell tumor and osteosarcoma) as well as any other malignant cancer. Please contact the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS or **[grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org)** if you are submitting a suspected malignant biopsy using a study Biopsy Kit, or if your patient is diagnosed with malignancy without using a study Biopsy Kit.

If your patient is diagnosed with malignancy without using a study Biopsy Kit, we request a full set of samples (blood, urine, feces, hair and nails) as soon as possible after diagnosis and before treatment is started. We also request that any tissue blocks and/or slides of the malignancy be shipped to Morris Animal Foundation for review and entry into a tissue bank. Please contact the study team for a Diagnosis Kit and to discuss transfer of the histopathology samples.

Please note that lymph node biopsy is required to diagnose lymphoma. Cytology alone is insufficient. Lymph node biopsy should occur before any treatment, including prednisone.

After malignancy is confirmed, log on to [morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org) to complete an Additional Veterinary Visit (AVV) form. You can access the AVV questionnaire by clicking on the red button labeled AVV on each patient's study page. Please note that each diagnosis may be summarized in a single AVV. Treatment and follow-up examinations will be documented on the subsequent Annual Veterinarian Questionnaire.

To summarize, an AVV will be completed:

- after a biopsy submitted through the study confirms malignancy, or
- after a biopsy submitted through your regular clinic protocol confirms malignancy.

### **Necropsy**

Everything that we learn from observing your patient throughout its lifetime is valuable. Important additional information can be gained at the time of a dog's death. We have instructed owners that a necropsy is optional, but we hope you will encourage them to participate in this important final step of the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study. Please discuss necropsy options with your client to help them make this difficult decision.

The necropsy can be performed by you or by a veterinary pathologist. If requested, a Necropsy Kit has been shipped to your client. It contains instructions, labels, and shipping supplies. The client is instructed to provide this kit to the veterinarian presiding at death or necropsy. In the event that you are able to notify the study team in advance of a euthanasia, we also can provide clinical pathology and histopathology supplies for necropsy. If the participant's death is unexpected, please use supplies available at your clinic and complete the necropsy as best able. The most up-to-date necropsy instructions are available at [Necropsy Kit: Collection and Shipping Instructions](#), or from the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647).

After reviewing necropsy results, please log on to [morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org) to complete a Death and Necropsy Questionnaire. If you refer your client to a veterinary pathologist, the pathologist should provide you with a completed Necropsy Checklist from the Necropsy Kit. This form contains the data that you will enter online. Only the dog's registered study veterinarian can report the necropsy findings through their account online.

Visit for an [Overview of Necropsy Procedures](#).

## Study Kit Tutorial

### 1 Annual Study Kit

The Annual Study Kit ships to the owner after the owner questionnaire is completed. Owner questionnaires are available on the online study portal 30 days before each dog's study anniversary. Contact the study team at [grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org) or 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647) if you need to change a dog's anniversary date.



The Box

### 2 On-hand Biopsy Kit

Odd study-year kits (study year 3, 5, 7, etc), also contain an on-hand Biopsy Kit. This Biopsy Kit should be kept intact in its large plastic bag at the veterinary clinic or a safe place in the home, and be used to biopsy a suspected malignancy. Please note that a strong suspicion of malignancy is required to use a study Biopsy Kit. Review the **Biopsy Decision Tree** to determine if study involvement is appropriate.

(Please note that at the time of biopsy, blood/urine/feces/hair/nails are collected similar to an annual study examination.)



Odd study-year kits also contain a Biopsy Kit



Odd year on-hand Biopsy Kit should be left in the large plastic bag

### 3 On-demand Biopsy Kit

Biopsy kits can be obtained when needed by online request under the Study Veterinarian Resources tab at [morriscaninimalfoundation.org](http://morriscaninimalfoundation.org) or by contacting the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647). Veterinarians are encouraged to consult with the study team about biopsy submission, but our goal is to make resources available even in an emergency.

(Please note that at the time of biopsy, blood/urine/feces/hair/nails are collected similar to an annual study examination.)

### 4 On-hand Necropsy Kit (only one available per dog)

On-hand Necropsy Kits were distributed to the owner of each participant that consented to a necropsy as of the June 28, 2017 deadline. These kits contain instructions, patient-specific labels, and shipping supplies that will never expire in a zipped plastic folder. (Folders are green or orange. The color has no significance). The Necropsy Client Consent form\* and on-hand kit are offered as a pre-planning tool, so that at the time of death, information can be presented to the attending veterinarian with minimal effort by a grieving owner.

- Consent status can be changed at any time.
- Having an on-hand Necropsy Kit does not obligate an owner to go through with a necropsy.
- If consent changes from "no" to "yes" after October 2017, an on-hand kit will be distributed within 3-4 months.
- Please keep on-hand kits with each dog's caretaker in a secure location (such as with vaccine and health certificates in the home or RV) since it will only be created one time. If an on-hand kit becomes damaged or misplaced, instructions may be downloaded or printed at [morriscaninimalfoundation.org](http://morriscaninimalfoundation.org), but additional supplies will not be shipped until required by a veterinarian.



On-hand Necropsy Kit

#### On-hand Necropsy Kit contents:

- Paperwork, labels, plastic bags
- Specific for each dog
- Will never expire

\*The Necropsy Client Consent form can be found at the bottom of the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study tab for each enrolled dog. A printable version is available to include in your dog's medical records if desired.

**NECROPSY CLIENT CONSENT**

★ Everything we learn from observing your dog throughout its lifetime will be valuable. Additional information can be gained at the time of your dog's death. To save you worry at that time, we are now providing a Necropsy Consent Form that you can place on file with your veterinarian.

Would you be willing to consider a necropsy (post-mortem examination) at the time of your dog's death?

Yes  
 No

[Save](#)

[Click here to print form.](#)

[Return to My Homepage](#)

## 5 On-demand Necropsy Kit

Complete Necropsy Kits can be obtained when needed by online request under the Study Veterinarian Resources tab at [morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://morrisanimalfoundation.org) or by contacting the study team at 855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647). Veterinarians are encouraged to consult with the study team about this procedure as needed, but our goal is to make resources available even in an emergency.

## 6 Diagnosis Kit

At the time of malignancy diagnosis and BEFORE treatment is started, blood/urine/feces/hair/nails are collected, similar to an annual study examination. Diagnosis Kits are shipped directly to the veterinarian when a dog is diagnosed with any malignancy without using a Study Biopsy Kit or if the diagnosis is not amenable to biopsy. Diagnosis Kits are similar to the Annual Study Kit, but contents are specifically coded for each diagnosis.

**Please note that lymph node biopsy is required to diagnose lymphoma. Fine needle aspirate or cytology is insufficient. Please collect a lymph node biopsy prior to starting treatment for suspected lymphoma.**

Reminder – Tubes in each study kit are specifically coded for the patient and type of sample collection (e.g. - annual visit, biopsy, diagnosis, etc), and should not be intermixed. Please call the study team if you need additional supplies.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study!

## Resources

### FAQs

Questions? Visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section to learn more.

### Additional Reading

#### *For Veterinarians*

#### **Connecting with Grieving Clients: Supportive Communication for 14**

##### **Common Situations**

Laurel Lagoni, MS, and Dana Durrance, MA  
AAHA Press, Lakewood, Colorado  
ISBN 978-1-58326-166-8

#### **Managing the Canine Cancer Patient:**

##### **A Practical Guide to Compassionate Care**

by Greg Ogilvie, DVM, and Antony Moore  
Veterinary Learning Systems, Yardley, PA  
ISBN 978-1884254567

#### *For Owners*

#### **Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life**

by Nancy Kay, DVM  
ISBN 978-146351464

#### **The Golden Retriever**

by Jeffrey G. Pepper  
ISBN 978-1-59378-686-1

#### **The Power of Positive Dog Training**

by Pat Miller  
ISBN 978-0470241844

#### **Zoobiquity**

by Barbara Natterson-Horowitz, MD,  
and Kathryn Bowers  
ISBN 978-0-307-59348-1

#### **How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With**

by Clarice Rutherford and David H. Neil  
ISBN 978-157790761

#### **Pets Living with Cancer:**

**A pet owner's resource**  
by Robin Downing, DVM  
AAHA Press  
ISBN 1-58326-022-6

#### **The Golden Retriever Puppy Handbook**

by R. Ann Johnson  
ISBN 978-0878501656

#### **When Your Pet Dies: A Guide to Mourning, Remembering and Healing**

by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD  
ISBN 978-1879651364

#### **The Golden Retriever Handbook**

by D. Caroline Coile PhD  
ISBN 978-0764141447

#### **The Ultimate Golden Retriever: A Howell Dog book of Distinction**

by Valerie Foss  
ISBN 978-0764526381

#### **Making Decisions When Your Companion Animal is Sick**

by The Argus Institute  
Colorado State University

## Resources

### About Morris Animal Foundation

Morris Animal Foundation is a nonprofit organization that invests in science that advances veterinary medicine for companion animals, horses and wildlife. We are a global leader in animal health science, and our funding helps more species in more places than that of any other organization in the world.

### Our History

Dr. Mark L. Morris Sr. believed there was a need for a foundation that solely addressed the health and well-being of animals. He also knew science has the power to change the world. When he established Morris Animal Foundation in 1948, Dr. Morris envisioned a world in which scientific discoveries would lead to healthy lives for animals.

### Our Impact

Since our founding, Morris Animal Foundation has invested over \$118 million toward more than 2,600 studies, and these studies have led to significant breakthroughs in diagnostics, treatments, preventions and cures benefitting animals. Some of the breakthroughs funded through the Foundation have become gold standards in veterinary care.

- Improved cancer treatments and diagnostics: Morris Animal Foundation has supported more than 200 animal cancer studies. These studies have led to more effective chemotherapy treatments and improved diagnostic tools for cancers affecting dogs, cats and horses.
- Vaccines for preventing disease: Morris Animal Foundation funded preliminary work that led to the development of numerous vaccines, including those for parvovirus in dogs, leukemia in cats and Potomac Horse fever in horses. These vaccines have saved the lives of thousands of animals.
- Dietary management of health issues: Foundation-funded investigators have improved dietary management of diabetes in cats, kidney disease in dogs, and Equine Metabolic Syndrome in horses.
- Tools for studying genetic diseases: Foundation-funded researchers have developed tools for discovering genetic mutations and predispositions to feline diseases. Other studies have led to genetic tests for equine, feline and canine diseases.
- Care and protection for endangered species: The Foundation established the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project in 1986 and was its sole funder for nearly 25 years. The project, now its own nonprofit organization, remains one of only a few conservation programs in the world to provide care and treatment to an endangered species in its natural habitat. Additional studies have led to state legislation that increased protections for endangered California sea otters.



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720 S. Colorado Blvd, Suite 174A, Denver, CO 80246  
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855.4GR.DOGS (855.447.3647)

**FOUNDING PARTNER**

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