

Cancer - Neoplasia
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE
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CANCER - NEOPLASIA

What is it?

Cancer is a disease in which certain cells grow and multiply in a way that is uncontrolled by the body. This may result in growths (tumours) which are capable of spreading (metastasis), causing damage or even proving fatal in malignant types. Other forms of cancer can affect the blood or the lymphatic system. We see cancer in all species of domestic animal but mostly in dogs, horses and cats.

Common types of cancer seen at the AVMC are Osteosarcoma, Fibrosarcoma, Lymphosarcoma, Leukosis, Leukaemia, Malignant Lymphoma, Mast Cell Tumours, Histiocytoma, Haemangiosarcoma, Lung Cancer, Squamous Cell Carcinoma, Liver Tumours, Splenic Tumours and Mammary Carcinoma (Mammary Tumours). Benign growths are a separate issue from this article.

Symptoms and signs

Symptoms and signs will depend upon the type of tumour, its location and its size. Lung cancer can tend to give rise to a light, husky cough. A tumour affecting drainage of bile in the liver can give rise to jaundice. Lymphoma can give rise to palpably and visibly swollen lymph nodes, either locally or in all lymph nodes of the body. Weight loss, bony face, poor exercise tolerance and dullness are general signs that often accompany cancer.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis may be made by blood samples, ultrasound scans or X-Ray investigations. MRI scanning is becoming more widespread in modern veterinary work. Biopsy or cell smear remain the most definitive method of diagnosis, biopsies may be taken surgically or by fine needle aspiration. Some of these techniques can be intrusive and invasive and may not be in the animal's best interests. For example, biopsy may theoretically encourage more widespread

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distribution of cancer cells within the body. In some cases, simple non-intrusive clinical diagnosis, by observation and palpation can suffice.

Treatment

Surgical excision, steroid or various combinations remain the usual options offered conventionally. If the tumour is malignant and invasive, surgical removal may lead to 'release' and rapid development of secondary growths that may already have started in a very small way. Particular examples are osteosarcoma and mammary carcinoma, in which secondary development (mostly in the lungs) is a frequent sequel to surgery. Not all types of cancer are considered amenable to chemotherapy. Interestingly, chemotherapy is not usually taken as badly by canine patients as it is by humans but, nonetheless, there are usually deleterious side effects and some sensitive patients can be made very miserable indeed.

In alternative medicine, we believe that if the body has the power and will to fight the cancer, if it is appropriately stimulated (e.g. by [homeopathy](#)) and if any possible obstacles to recovery are removed, then the cancer will regress. This is borne out in real-life experience by a fair number of cases of most types of malignant cancer. It even appears from experience that, contrary to popularly-held belief, homeopathy can still exert benefit even in the face of chemotherapy or steroid treatment. This means it doesn't have to be an 'either/or' approach.

A change to a healthy, [natural diet](#) is an essential component of the holistic approach.

Possible causes

Some causative factors that appear to have been identified from past cases are injury and trauma, whether mental or physical, chemical exposure, so-called 'electro-magnetic smog' incorrect diet, viruses and vaccination. These factors may act singly or together. In this connection, it is interesting and concerning to note that many living vaccines are cultured on laboratory cell cultures which intentionally contain cancer DNA. In cats, there is a known risk of cancer developing at the site of injection, possibly for this very reason.

Outlook (prognosis)

As stated above, resolution and possibly cure are not impossible targets, in an encouraging number of cases. However, it is clear that cancer is a particularly vicious and powerful enemy and the prognosis offered at the outset of treatment of any single case can rarely be bright.

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