



Perth Veterinary Oncology

Haemangiosarcoma

Haemangiosarcoma is a cancer that forms from blood vessels. It most commonly forms in the skin, or internal organs such as the spleen or heart. In both dogs and cats, the internal form is very serious and without treatment, most patients have a life span of weeks to months. The skin form can be aggressive in some cases, and the laboratory results following surgical removal or biopsy will determine this. **There are 3 successful forms of treatment available** at present to fight this disease. The first is surgery. If possible, all visible disease needs to be removed. If this involves removal of a benign (or unable to spread) skin haemangiosarcoma, then surgery alone can be curative. For all other forms in dogs and cats, tumour spread elsewhere is expected to have occurred even though it usually will not be visible or detectable immediately.

The other 2 forms of treatment involve the use of medications. **Medical treatment is available that results in significantly longer periods of normal quality of life following surgery.** Whilst not every patient responds, most experience a good 6 to 12 months or longer. The treatment is given in such a way that **side effects are uncommon.** Treatments are generally given on 12 occasions, one and a half weeks apart and require that your pet be in hospital with us for as little as four hours on each occasion. Costs can be high, with medical cancer therapy treatments costing hundreds of dollars per treatment visit. Treatment is not curative though some patients will live normal lives for several years.

Alternatively, there is treatment available that can prevent blood vessel growth leading to a slowing down of tumour growth overall. Treatments aimed at preventing blood vessel growth are given at home, and require visits and blood testing a month apart initially, but less often later. Treatment costs are likely to be a few dollars per day for this form of therapy.

The 2 forms of medical treatment above work in different ways and therefore ideally are used together, giving many pets the potential for normal quality of life for much longer periods to spend with their family.

In addition, we are able to advise on nutritional and other aspects designed to help your pet fight and/or tolerate the cancer better.

Referral is easily organised through your usual veterinarian. Dr Ken Wyatt is the only Veterinary Oncologist in Western Australia.

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