



# Vets Love Pets!



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## Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis

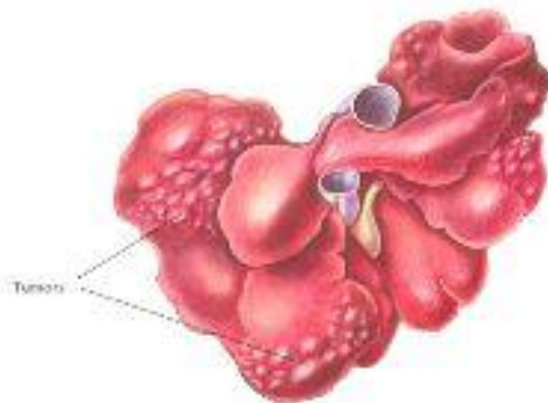
### *What is Cancer?*

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body. These cells divide rapidly, and uncontrollably. Oftentimes they will deviate from a localized area and spread to adjacent areas of the body.

These cells grow in clusters that form tumours. The tumours may be benign tumours (non-cancerous), or malignant tumours (cancerous). Benign tumours are usually not life threatening, but may need to be removed to alleviate discomfort. On the other hand, malignant tumours will spread to surrounding cells and must be removed. If you notice any lumps or bumps on your pet it is important to report it to your veterinarian immediately. Your veterinarian may recommend checking the lump or bump by

aspirating it with a fine needle to insure that it is not of major concern.

For more information please contact us at (780) 458 6051 to speak with a member of our healthcare team.



The above picture shows the growth of a malignant tumor. Source: [www.petsecure.com](http://www.petsecure.com)



### *Annual Exams Save Lives*



It is important to never underestimate the significance of annual exams on your pet. An annual physical exam has the potential to catch various health concerns before you or your pet are aware there is a problem. As your pet approaches senior years (aged 7 and up), these exams become even more important and may be recommended semi-annually. Generally speaking, an annual exam on a pet is equivalent to a human receiving an exam every 5 years. The risk of cancer increases proportionally with age, occurring in roughly 50% of pets over the age of 10.

When conducting an annual exam, your veterinarian examines your pet from the tip of their tail, to the tip of their nose. In addition to checking for lumps and bumps, your vet will look for changes in skin tone, lymph nodes, and sounds in the lungs. By feeling the abdomen, your vet will check for tenderness, masses, or any other abnormalities that may have formed. An oral health exam is also included in the annual exam and will detect any concerns detrimental to your pet's health.

## What are the Possible Treatment Options?



The three main ways to treat pet cancer are surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Most general practitioners can offer your pet surgery or chemotherapy to treat cancer; however, radiation must be done in a cancer centre. (ACTSS.com, 2010)

Once a diagnosis has been made, your veterinarian will refer you to a cancer centre and veterinary oncologist.

## How can I determine if my pet has cancer?

The Veterinary Cancer Society lists the top ten warning signs of cancer as:

1. Abnormal swellings that persist or continue to grow.
2. Sores that do not heal.
3. Weight loss.
4. Bleeding or discharge from any body opening.
5. Hesitation to exercise or loss of stamina.
6. Offensive odour.
7. Difficulty eating or swallowing.
8. Persistent lameness or stiffness.
9. Difficulty breathing, urinating, or defecating.
10. Loss of appetite.

Cancer is not always visible to the naked eye. For this reason, it is important that any of the above symptoms are discussed with a Veterinary Health Professional immediately. Cancer in pets is time sensitive. In some extreme cases, it is common for a tumour to triple in size over night if it had been somehow traumatized that day.

## Is Financing Available?

Organizations such as the Animal Cancer Therapy Subsidization Society are available to help dedicated pet owners fund cancer treatments for their pets. ACTSS is a not-for-profit organization. This society funds many programs that educate pet owners and veterinarians on availability, uses and benefits of advanced cancer therapies in the treatment of veterinary cancers. Visit [www.ACTSS.ca](http://www.ACTSS.ca).

## Steps to Prevent Cancer in Best Pal

Like humans, diet and exercise can help prevent some forms of cancer. Additionally, spaying and neutering your pet will help to prevent reproductive cancers from forming. It is also a good idea to keep your pet at a healthy weight. Obesity is a concern, affecting far too many pets and a cause of cancer.



## Does Pet Insurance Cover Cancer Related Expenses?

Fortunately, many pet insurance plans DO cover cancer related expenses. It is wise to do your research before committing to a pet health insurance plan to insure that the plan suits the needs of you and your family.



This picture is of Kamo, a strong willed Rottweiler who was diagnosed with a Soft Tissue Sarcoma. Kamo belonged to our Operations Manager, Dawn Phillips. His treatment was made possible, in part, by funding from ACTSS. Source: [www.acctc.ca](http://www.acctc.ca)