

Cancers in Dogs



Understanding Cancer in Dogs

Cancer is one of the leading health concerns in dogs, particularly as they grow older. Just like in people, cancer occurs when cells grow and divide uncontrollably, often forming tumors or spreading throughout the body. While the word “cancer” can be frightening, advances in veterinary medicine mean that many cancers can be treated or managed, improving quality of life and outcomes.



Common Types of Cancer in Dogs

- **Lymphoma** – Cancer of the lymphatic system (lymph nodes, spleen).
- **Mast Cell Tumors** – A common skin cancer in dogs, which can vary from mild to aggressive.
- **Melanoma** – Tumors often found in the mouth, skin, or toes.
- **Osteosarcoma** – Bone cancer, more common in large and giant breeds.
- **Hemangiosarcoma** – A cancer of blood vessels, often affecting the spleen, liver, or heart.
- **Mammary Gland Tumors** – More common in unspayed female dogs.
- **Soft Tissue Sarcomas** – Tumors that arise from connective tissues under the skin.



Warning Signs of Cancer

Not every lump or change means cancer, but it’s important to have new symptoms evaluated by your veterinarian. Signs to watch for include:

- *Lumps or bumps that grow or change in shape/texture*
- *Sores that do not heal*
- *Loss of appetite or weight loss*
- *Difficulty eating, swallowing, or breathing*
- *Lameness or swelling in a limb*
- *Persistent coughing or vomiting*
- *Bleeding or discharge from the mouth, nose, or other openings*
- *Behavioral changes such as lethargy or withdrawal*



Diagnosis

If cancer is suspected, your veterinarian may recommend:

- *Physical examination*

- **Fine needle aspiration (FNA)** to collect and examine cells
- **Biopsy** for a definitive diagnosis
- **Bloodwork and imaging (X-rays, ultrasound, CT scans)** to assess internal organs and staging



Treatment Options

Treatment depends on the type, location, and stage of cancer. Options may include:

- **Surgery** – To remove tumors when possible
- **Chemotherapy** – To slow or stop cancer cell growth
- **Radiation therapy** – For localized tumor control
- **Targeted medications** – For certain tumor types
- **Palliative care** – To maintain comfort and quality of life



Early Detection Saves Lives

Many cancers respond best when detected early. Regular veterinary checkups and monitoring any new lumps, bumps, or changes in your dog's behavior or health are essential.

Our Commitment at PVPC



At **Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic**, we believe no lump or change should be ignored. Our veterinary team is here to:

- *Identify and evaluate suspicious changes early*
- *Provide clear diagnostic options*
- *Develop treatment and comfort plans tailored to your dog*
- *Support you and your pet through every stage of care*

📞 *Contact us today if you've noticed changes in your dog's health — together, we can take the next steps toward keeping them healthy and comfortable.*