



Hepatic Neoplasia

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination
Blood work
Urinalysis
X-ray of the liver
Ultrasound
Liver biopsy
Exploratory surgery

Therapeutic Plan

Supportive care
Chemotherapy
Surgery

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement
Special attention should be given to protein levels and amino-acid balance of the food

Hepatic Neoplasia

Your pet has hepatic neoplasia. Fortunately, hepatic neoplasia (liver tumor) is rare in dogs and cats. When it does occur, surgical removal of the tumors is the recommended treatment. This client education sheet will help you learn more about this condition and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Hepatic Neoplasia

Tumors of the liver may arise from the liver itself or from the gallbladder. These tumors are called primary liver tumors, and they may be benign or malignant. Benign tumors remain localized within the liver. If they are diagnosed and removed before they become advanced, the long-term outlook for the patient is good. Malignant tumors tend to spread to other organs, making treatment very difficult. Unfortunately, the long-term outlook for patients with malignant tumors of the liver is poor. Liver tumors are rare in dogs and rarer still in cats. Most pets that develop these tumors are 10 years old or older.

Causes

The cause of hepatic neoplasia is unknown.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian may perform some or all of the following diagnostic tests if he or she suspects hepatic neoplasia: physical examination to check for an enlarged liver or fluid in the abdomen, blood tests, analysis of fluid withdrawn from the abdomen, x-rays of the abdomen and chest, and ultrasound. Tumor tissue must be examined under a microscope to confirm the diagnosis. The tissue specimen may be obtained by biopsy or during surgical exploration of the abdomen.

Treatment and Home Care

Surgical removal is the treatment of choice for liver tumors. But many tumors, especially malignant ones, are too far advanced to remove by the time they are diagnosed. Animals with advanced hepatic tumors that can't be removed should be made as comfortable as possible until their quality of life becomes such that euthanasia is the only humane option.

Home care following surgery consists of giving all prescribed medications and checking the incision at least once a day for swelling and discharges. If either occurs, or if your pet is depressed and won't eat, see your veterinarian at once. Skin sutures will need to be removed according to your veterinarian's instructions.

Follow-up appointments, including repeated diagnostic tests, are often necessary for patients with liver tumors.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has hepatic neoplasia, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, clinical signs, and organs and body systems principally affected by the tumor tissue. Some pets with hepatic cancer, but otherwise normal liver function, may benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy during recovery from surgery or as part of the treatment plan for cancer. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline p/d® or Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine n/d®.

If your pet has hepatic neoplasia and impaired liver function, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. The objective of dietary therapy for patients with impaired liver function is to provide optimal nutrition while decreasing the workload of the liver. Excessive protein levels should be avoided because they increase the liver's workload and may contribute to the development of nervous system signs such as depression and convulsions. Excessive levels of dietary sodium may contribute to fluid build-up in the body and, therefore, should be avoided. The energy in the pet's food should be present in the form of easily digested carbohydrates, high-quality fats, and provide omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin E. Special foods with these nutritional characteristics include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline l/d®.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.