



Feline Lymphosarcoma

The tumor mass is often white on the cut surface, and the capsule is thinned. Microscopically, malignant cells have replaced normal cells and destroyed the normal architecture of the lymph node.



Feline Lymphosarcoma

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination
Blood work
FeLV test
X-rays
Urinalysis
Biopsy of tissues
Cell studies
Endoscopy
Exploratory surgery
Examinations of chest and
Abdominal fluid
Bone marrow biopsy
Cerebral spinal fluid examination

Therapeutic Plan

Supportive therapy
Chemotherapy
Surgical excision
Radiation

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement or disease.

Feline Lymphosarcoma

Your cat has lymphosarcoma. Lymphosarcoma is a cancer of your pet's lymphatic system. The signs you see and the treatment your veterinarian prescribes depend on where the tumors are located. Anemia, weight loss, appetite loss, and organ failure are commonly seen. This client education sheet will help you learn more about lymphosarcoma and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home.

What You Should Know About Feline Lymphosarcoma

The lymphatic system is a network of capillaries and vessels that filter and return fluids picked up in the body to the blood stream. Lymphoid tissue is present in most tissues, including the spleen and bone marrow. The tonsils are part of the lymphatic system, as are the lymph nodes, which are found throughout the body.

Lymphosarcoma is cancer of the lymphatic tissue. It is associated with the feline leukemia virus complex, which is estimated to affect from 2 to 15% of the cat population. The diseases caused by the feline leukemia virus include tumors and suppression of the immune system, leading to secondary infections and diseases. About 30% of all tumors in cats are lymphosarcomas.

Although lymphosarcoma may occur in any organ, it occurs with greatest frequency in the spleen, liver, and lymph nodes; chest; and the digestive tract. Leukemia, which is a malignant disease of the blood-forming organs characterized by cancerous cells in the bone marrow and blood stream, occurs in about 30% of cats with lymphosarcoma.

Causes

Lymphosarcoma is caused by the feline leukemia virus. This virus is contagious among cats and transmitted via the saliva.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian may need to perform several tests to diagnose lymphosarcoma, determine which organs are affected, and monitor response to therapy. Some tumors of superficial lymph nodes (those underneath the skin) and those in the abdomen can be felt, as can an enlarged spleen, liver, and, sometimes, intestinal tract. Tumors of the tonsils can be found during an oral exam. Altered chest sounds may provide a clue to chest tumors. Blood tests, urinalyses, x-rays of the chest and abdomen, ultrasound, a bone marrow evaluation, and a biopsy of enlarged organs are all very useful procedures. Examining biopsy specimens with the aid of a microscope or finding abnormal cells in the blood or bone marrow can confirm the diagnosis. The feline leukemia test provides a very useful clue.

Treatment and Home Care

Feline lymphosarcoma is unlikely to be cured, but therapy can reduce the severity of clinical signs and add quality to your pet's life. Most lymphosarcomas are managed with chemotherapy. Diminished clinical signs (remission) occur in more than 50% of cats given chemotherapy. Life expectancy depends on how advanced the disease is at the time of diagnosis. Many cats live at least six months from the time treatment is begun.

Your veterinarian will need to treat other problems caused by lymphosarcoma and immune system suppression such as chronic abscesses, pneumonia, and oral ulcers.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications, coaxing your pet to eat, and watching for the recurrence of clinical signs. Your veterinarian will schedule follow-up appointments and lab tests to monitor your pet's progress.

Vaccination may help prevent feline leukemia. Vaccination will not help if your cat already has lymphosarcoma. But it can help prevent the disease in other cats you may have, provided they haven't already been exposed.

Nutritional Plan

If your cat has lymphosarcoma, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, the clinical signs, the treatment protocol, and the organs and body systems principally affected by the tumor tissue. Many debilitated and anemic patients benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy to help correct nutrient deficiencies and replenish body stores. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Feline p/d® or Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine/Feline a/d®. Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine/Feline a/d® also has high arginine to stimulate the immune system.

If your pet has kidney failure as a result of complication of lymphosarcoma, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary product with reduced levels of protein, phosphorus, and sodium. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Feline k/d®. Foods with these nutritional characteristics help reduce wastes that build up in the blood stream of kidney failure patients and aid in the maintenance of normal blood pressure.

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, or hand feeding for the first few days. Do not add water to your cat's food though. Feed only the recommended food. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. 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.