



Southern Counties

VETERINARY  
SPECIALISTS

# Lymphoma in cats and dogs

Information Sheet

**Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists  
Specialist Referral Service**



## What is Lymphoma?

Lymphoma is a common tumour in dogs, cats and human. This cancer originated from lymphocytes. These cells control and tune the immune system. As several types of lymphocytes exist in the immune system several forms of lymphoma occur in cats and dogs.

## Why does Lymphoma occur?

Usually this tumour arises from lymph node and spleens where lymphocytes are high in number. However as the immune-system is present in every organ of the body, lymphoma can be present in any organ including liver, lung, brain, bone and skin.

## What are the signs of Lymphoma?

The most common form of lymphoma in dogs cause enlargement of the lymph node. Some patients can be very ill others appear well in themselves.

The most common form of lymphoma in cats is the gastrointestinal one. Therefore vomiting, diarrhoea and weight loss are the most common clinical signs.

## How is Lymphoma investigated by the veterinary surgeon?

The diagnosis of lymphoma is usually reached by collection of the affected tissue (biopsy).

## What treatment options are available?

Rarely lymphoma affects only one lymph node (or organ). Therefore only in few instances surgery is beneficial as treatment. Most of the patients with lymphoma are treated with chemotherapy.

The goal of chemotherapy in pets is obtain a good to excellent quality of life for the longer period of time possible.

## What is the prognosis for my pet?

The vast majority of the pets with lymphoma will die because of the progression of the disease. Some forms of lymphoma are very aggressive, patients with this forms may survive just few days or weeks even on chemotherapy.

Some forms of lymphoma are less aggressive and respond very well to chemotherapy. Some patients can have normal life for several months even more than one year on chemotherapy.

## What are the side effects and risks associated with treatment?

Up to 90-95% of the patients receiving chemotherapy have none or only very mild side effect of chemotherapy commonly seen in human such vomiting, nausea and anorexia.



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