



Haemangiosarcoma Information Handout

Haemangiosarcoma is a cancer that forms from blood vessels. It most commonly forms in the skin, or internal organs such as the spleen or heart. In both dogs and cats, the internal form is very serious. Without treatment, most patients have a life span of days to weeks. The skin form can be aggressive in some cases, and the laboratory results will determine this.

There are 3 successful forms of treatment available at present to fight this disease. The first is surgery. If possible, all visible disease needs to be removed. If this involves removal of a benign (or unable to spread) skin haemangiosarcoma, then surgery alone can be curative. For all other forms in dogs and cats, tumour spread elsewhere is expected even though it usually will not be visible or detectable immediately.

The other 2 forms of treatment involve the use of medications. For patients that have had all visible tumour removed, medical treatment is available that results in significantly longer periods of normal quality of life following surgery- Whilst not every patient responds, there is a 50% chance of living another 6 to 12 months or longer, and a 10% chance of cure. The treatment is given in such a way that side effects are uncommon. If the spread of tumour is advanced (in other words, visible) then this treatment can still be used but is often not as successful. Alternatively, there is treatment available that can prevent blood vessels from growing further into the tumour leading to a halting of tumour growth.

Treatments are generally given on 5 occasions, 3 weeks apart and require that your pet be in hospital at Murdoch University for as little as a few hours. Treatments aimed at preventing blood vessel growth are given at home, and require visits fortnightly initially, but less often later