Our practice is a partner with The Veterinary Cancer Center (The VCC) in Norwalk, CT. The VCC is a specialized veterinary practice dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of cancer in animals. Our partnership with The VCC adds another dimension of compassionate cancer care and medical expertise to the services we offer our patients for the treatment of cancer.

Additionally, The VCC’s board-certified oncologists participate in clinical trials with organizations such as the ACI (Animal Clinical Investigation), which is the largest veterinary oncology clinical trials organization in the United States. This dynamic collaboration will help to advance comparative oncology and veterinary medical research that will ultimately change the world. Together, we bring hope to more pet owners.

129 Glover Avenue • Norwalk, CT 06850 • 203.838.6626
www.vcchope.com

The VCC is an ACI-designated clinical trial partner.

When Your Pet’s Diagnosis is Cancer ... there is hope.
At First ...

Perhaps you noticed a change in your pet’s behavior ... your normally frisky dog or playful cat has become listless – or you feel a lump where there wasn’t one before ... you take your pet to your family vet and are told “it may be cancer.”

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At The Veterinary Cancer Center (The VCC), we treat your pet as if they were our own. In the words of Dr. Gerald Post, principal of The Veterinary Cancer Center and founder of Animal Cancer Foundation, “Smokey taught me the value of leaving no stone unturned in the search for better therapies and the importance of hope.”

ABOUT PET CANCER

Cancer is the number one natural cause of death in older cats and dogs. However, it is also one of the most treatable compared with diseases like heart failure or kidney failure. As with humans, there have been amazing advances in the treatment of cancer that can provide your pet with a high quality of life for years to come. One of the first steps your veterinarian will take is to recommend a specialist, a veterinary oncologist, to create a total program of expert care, achieving the best possible outcome. Please remember that age is not a disease. Animals that we may consider “old” can handle therapy just as well as young animals, and may benefit from therapy that is tailored to their “biologic age” (how they are doing physiologically) rather than relying on their numeric age.

HOW DID MY PET GET CANCER?

The cause of cancer in pet animals, just like in people, is largely unknown. There are certain breeds that tend to get certain types of cancers more often than others, such as large and giant breed dogs who get bone tumors. There are also environmental factors, such as exposure to the sun, that may be associated with increased incidence of cancer.

ARE PET CANCER AND HUMAN CANCER THE SAME?

Most cancers in dogs and cats are biologically similar to cancers in people. The difference between veterinary and human oncology lies in the philosophy of treatment. The oncologists at The VCC place emphasis on maximizing quality of life, while at the same time trying to give your pet the longest survival time. We understand how important your pet’s quality of life is to you and we agree that this needs to always be at the forefront of our recommendations. With recently developed medications and treatments, we are now – more than ever before – able to reduce or eliminate most side effects of therapy. Because of this, and the lower doses of chemotherapy used at The VCC, the toxicity that is seen in people treated with chemotherapy and radiation therapy is not seen in our patients.

CANCER IS NOT A DEATH SENTENCE

The recent advances in the detection and treatment of cancer for both pets and humans have been significant. Using the latest treatments and newest technologies available, we can enhance the quality and duration of your pet’s life. Your veterinary team will work to provide you with the information you need to make decisions about your pet’s care and treatment.

Giving hope for a happier, longer life.
Your pet will need a series of tests to determine if it is cancer, the type of cancer, where it is, how fast it is growing, and whether the tumor is benign or malignant. The results of these tests will tell the team: grade, stage, and type (name) of cancer.

**THE GRADE:** How fast the cancer is growing, how often it spreads (metastasis), and how aggressive it is, determines the grade.

**THE STAGE:** How big the tumor is, where it is in the body, and whether or not it has spread, determines the stage.

**THE TYPE (NAME):** There are hundreds of different types of cancers. Knowing the exact type of cancer defines the road map for treating it.

With an understanding of grade, stage, and type of cancer, your team can recommend the best way to treat the cancer.

**Treatment Options**

Multiple treatment options that combine chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation are the rule rather than the exception. This is because the treatment of cancer in animals has become as sophisticated and successful as the treatment of cancer in humans.

**Where To Begin**

**CHEMOTHERAPY**

Most chemotherapeutic drugs act directly on cancer cells, preventing them from maturing or reproducing. Unlike humans, the side effects of chemotherapy in pets are relatively mild. While some pets will get sick from the treatment, most people are surprised at how well their pets feel while undergoing chemotherapy. The goal is to slow the growth of cancer cells.

**SURGERY**

Surgery is the oldest form of cancer therapy and has been responsible for the cure of more patients than any other treatment. Success is mainly due to the development of new surgical techniques combined with chemotherapy and radiation for a total plan of treatment for your pet’s cancer.

**RADIATION THERAPY**

As with all cancer therapies, quality of life and freedom from any discomfort is priority. Like surgery, radiation is a regional treatment. In order to minimize the side effects, small dosages of radiation are administered over several weeks. However, newer technologies allow some tumors to be safely treated with a few large doses of radiation. The radiation oncologist will determine the appropriate dosage and the number of treatments for your pet to ensure the best possible outcome.

**CLINICAL TRIALS**

Clinical trials are health-related research studies that follow a predefined protocol, and they are an important part of our practice. If your pet participates in a clinical trial, you can play a more active role in your pet’s health care, gain access to new treatments before they are widely available, and help others (pets and people) by contributing to medical research. In addition, many of these clinical trials are funded, meaning the cost of care is reduced. At The VCC, we want our clients to have as many options as possible. By participating in clinical trials, we help to achieve that goal.
## About Some Common Cancers in Dogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer Type</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Signs</th>
<th>Treatment Options</th>
<th>Side Effects of Treatment*</th>
<th>Average Survival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lymphoma</td>
<td>A cancer of the immune system, like non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma in people. Most commonly seen in the lymph nodes, spleen, liver, and skin.</td>
<td>Swelling of the nodes, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite. Increased thirst and urination may also be seen.</td>
<td>Since it is a systemic cancer, chemotherapy is the best option. Radiation therapy and bone marrow transplant are also options.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: about 8 weeks. With chemotherapy: 80% of dogs go into remission and live for 6-14 months, with 25% living 2 years or more. Bone marrow transplantation may significantly improve this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemangiosarcoma</td>
<td>An aggressive cancer arising from blood vessels. The most common sites for this tumor are the spleen, liver, skin, and heart.</td>
<td>Episodes of weakness, collapse, swelling of the abdomen, and pale gums.</td>
<td>Surgically remove the mass; then systemic therapy with chemotherapy. The use of targeted therapies is currently being investigated.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 1-2 months. With chemotherapy: 5-9 months. There are some animals that can live much longer – those with the skin form and those whose disease is caught early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibrosarcoma Soft Tissue Sarcoma</td>
<td>A mass of connective tissue. These tumors can occur anywhere in the body, but are typically found in the skin, muscles, or mouth.</td>
<td>Firm swelling on the body; if in the mouth – foul odor, increased salivation, and difficulty eating.</td>
<td>Wide, deep surgical removal of mass; then radiation and chemotherapy if warranted, based on grade of tumor.</td>
<td>Radiation causes short-term damage to the skin, which resolves in 2-3 weeks. 80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Depends on location of the cancer and how early it is caught and treated, but 75% live over 5 years with appropriate therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Cell Carcinoma</td>
<td>The most common tumor of the urinary bladder. Some breeds are predisposed – Scotties, Beagles, West Highland White Terriers, and Shelties.</td>
<td>Difficulty, straining, and increased frequency of urination, blood in urine.</td>
<td>Primary treatment with chemotherapy and NSAIDs is quite effective. Surgery may be an option in some cases.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 1-2 months. With chemotherapy: 9-12 months or longer. New research is showing that different chemotherapies may help prolong survival even more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mast Cell Tumor</td>
<td>One of the most common skin tumors in dogs. There are Grades I, II, and III. Grade III is the most aggressive. New grading schemes may involve only low- and high-grade.</td>
<td>Reddish, raised masses on the skin or lumps that feel like fatty tumors. These masses may appear to come and go. These masses can vary in appearance and size, and may occur anywhere on the body.</td>
<td>Wide, deep surgical removal of mass. Radiation, chemotherapy, and targeted therapies are used for incompletely removed or high-grade tumors.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: dogs with high-grade tumors may live only 1-6 months. With chemotherapy: survival can be 5 years or more. Dogs with high-grade and even metastatic tumors can live for 1-3 years or more with therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteosarcoma</td>
<td>A cancer of the bone most often seen in large/giant breeds.</td>
<td>Lameness; pronounced swelling and pain, especially at joint areas.</td>
<td>Surgical removal of the tumor; may require amputation or a limb-sparing surgery, followed by chemotherapy, low-dose oral therapy and targeted therapy; radiation therapy may be needed in some cases.</td>
<td>Most animals handle amputation well. 80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy. Radiation causes short-term damage to the skin, which resolves in 2-3 weeks.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 3 months. With chemotherapy: 1-2 years, with 20-30% of the animals living for 2 years or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>A pigmented mass most often in the mouth, between the toes, or on the skin.</td>
<td>Odor or mass in mouth. Lameness or swelling on/or between toes.</td>
<td>Surgical removal, then possibly radiation therapy; immunotherapy with the Melanoma vaccine is almost always recommended. Chemotherapy may be recommended.</td>
<td>Radiation causes short-term damage to the skin or oral tissues, which resolves in 2-3 weeks. 80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 1-3 months. With aggressive therapy, many of these dogs can survive 1-3 years or longer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The most common side effects we see are short-term decreased appetite, decreased energy, nausea, or diarrhea. Medications or treatment adjustments may be used to treat or prevent these effects.
# About Some Common Cancers in Cats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Signs</th>
<th>Treatment Options</th>
<th>Side Effects of Treatment*</th>
<th>Average Survival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lymphoma</strong> A disease of the lymph system, like non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in people. There are both fast- and slow-growing types. The most common type in cats is the gastrointestinal form, but this disease can occur in the chest, kidneys, and nose.</td>
<td>Weight or appetite loss; vomiting or diarrhea; distension of the abdomen, increased urination, and swelling of lymph nodes.</td>
<td>Since it is a systemic cancer, chemotherapy is the best option, but recent work may indicate a benefit of radiation therapy in the treatment of some forms of this disease.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 4-6 weeks. With chemotherapy: 70% respond and live 7 to 12 months; 30% - 40% live 2 years or more. Some cats can live for over 5-6 years with treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fibrosarcoma</strong> A tumor of connective tissue. These tumors can occur anywhere in the body, but are typically found in the skin, muscles, or mouth.</td>
<td>A mass between the shoulders, on a limb, or on the hip; lameness; weight loss; increased salivation; foul odor from the mouth.</td>
<td>Wide, deep surgical removal of mass; then radiation and chemotherapy. The use of low-dose oral therapy and targeted therapy is being investigated.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy, and cats handle radiation therapy better than most animals.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 5-9 months. Only surgery: 18-24 months. Surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy: 3-4 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squamous Cell Carcinoma</strong> The most common tumor of the mouth, or lesions of the nose and ears. Usually found in older cats.</td>
<td>Swelling in the jaw or tongue; difficulty eating; foul odor from the mouth; excessive salivation; crusting lesions on nose or ears.</td>
<td>Surgical removal of a small mass; combination therapy for large masses works best.</td>
<td>Side effects from surgery vary depending on the extent and location of the surgery; cats handle chemotherapy and radiation therapy very well.</td>
<td>With small lesions, prognosis is good, with some cats living for well over 1 year; with large lesions, prognosis is poor, with many cats surviving for 3-9 months. There are ongoing studies looking for new ways to treat this disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mammary Gland Carcinoma</strong> An aggressive tumor located in the mammary glands that can spread quickly to lymph nodes and lungs.</td>
<td>Lumps, bruising, swelling, or pain in the mammary area. Owners may notice increased grooming behavior in the mammary area.</td>
<td>Surgical removal of tumors with mammary glands and chemotherapy. Chemotherapy has been proven to increase survival.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Caught early and treated aggressively, cats can live 2-3 years or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intestinal Adenocarcinoma</strong> A malignant tumor of the intestines. Usually found in older cats.</td>
<td>Weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite.</td>
<td>Surgery and chemotherapy can help extend survival time. The use of targeted therapy is currently being investigated.</td>
<td>80-90% of pets have minimal or no side effects from chemotherapy.</td>
<td>Without therapy: 3 months. Surgery plus chemotherapy can significantly improve survival time, often for longer than 1 year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The most common side effects we see are short-term decreased appetite, decreased energy, nausea, or diarrhea. Medications or treatment adjustments may be used to treat or prevent these effects.*
**Some Advice**
PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT. Before each visit to your pet’s doctor, write down questions you have. It may be important to you to take notes during discussions, and ask your pet’s doctor to repeat any information you do not understand. It may also help to bring a spouse, other family member, or friend with you when you talk to the veterinary team. Before you leave, ask your pet’s doctor for any printed materials or information about your pet’s disease and/or treatment options. You can also research your pet’s cancer using online resources, including the ones listed below.

**Trusted Resources**

**VETERINARY – CANCER**
Animal Cancer Foundation
www.animalcancer.org

The Blue Buffalo Foundation for Cancer
www.bluebuffalo.com

Colorado State College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
www.csuanimalcancercenter.org

The Riedel & Cody Fund
www.riedelcody.org

The Veterinary Cancer Center
www.vcchope.com

**FIND A SPECIALIST**

The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine
www.acvim.org

The American College of Veterinary Surgeons
www.acvs.org

**SUPPORT SERVICES/SITES**

**VETERINARY – GENERAL HEALTH**

The American Veterinary Medical Association – AVMA Vaccine Associated Feline Sarcoma Task Force
www.avma.org

**HUMAN – CANCER**

Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania
www.oncolink.org

The American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

Cancer Dictionary
www.cancer.gov/dictionary

Mayo Clinic
www.mayoclinic.org

The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
www.mskcc.org

The National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health
www.nci.nih.gov

Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven
www.ynhh.org/smilow-cancer-hospital

The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
www.uccc.info