

NASAL TUMORS

VETERINARY SPECIALISTS OF NORTH TEXAS

Nasal tumors make up ~1% of all cancers seen in dogs. It is thought that long-nosed breeds or dogs living in urban environments are at higher risk for the development of nasal tumors. Nasal tumors are seen less commonly in the cat.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A NASAL TUMOR?

Symptoms may include an intermittent and progressively worsening nasal discharge or bleeding from one or both nostrils. Facial deformity can be seen in some cases. Patients may exhibit excessive tears from one or both eyes. On rare occasions, animals may present with neurological signs due to direct invasion into the brain by the tumor. Transient improvement in clinical signs is often noted with symptomatic treatments such as antibiotics, antihistamines and corticosteroids, which often delays diagnosis.

HOW ARE NASAL TUMORS DIAGNOSED?

Other diseases of the nasal cavity such as fungal infections, foreign bodies, and allergies have symptoms similar to nasal tumors. Systemic bleeding disorders may also manifest as nasal bleeding. Hypertension (high blood pressure) can also cause nose bleeds. A definitive diagnosis of intranasal cancer requires a tissue biopsy.

Computerized tomography (CT) is the ideal way to diagnose and plan treatment of intranasal cancer. CT can indicate the presence of a tumor and the extent of the tumor. A tissue biopsy can be planned based on the location of the tumor identified from the CT.

HOW ARE NASAL TUMORS TREATED?

Radiation therapy is the treatment of choice in dogs and cats with intranasal cancers. Radiation therapy has the advantage of treating the entire nasal cavity, including any bone that is involved. Radiation therapy will result in improvement or resolution of clinical signs in the majority of patients. The treatment protocol is often based on the type of tumor, the extent of the disease and specifics unique to a particular patient.

WHAT IS THE PROGNOSIS FOR NASAL TUMORS?

Patients undergoing radiation treatment for certain nasal tumors can achieve clinical remission with good quality of life. The prognosis for nasal cancer depends on the tumor type, stage, and treatment chosen. Your oncologist will be able to discuss prognosis in your pet's case.

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