

Nasal Tumors in Cats

A Brief Guide • Part of the Educational Pet Disease Series from Lap of Love

Signs & Symptoms

Initial Symptoms

- Nasal bleeding
- Sneezing
- Weight loss
- Nasal discharge
- Bulging eye(s)
- Snoring
- Seizures (rare)

Intermediate Symptoms

- Lethargy
- Facial Deformity
- Dental disease
- Nasal Ulceration
- Bad breath
- Noisy Breathing
- Paralysis (rare)

Advanced Symptoms

- Reclusive behavior
- Decreased appetite
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye discharge/squinting
- Personality changes
- Mental stupor (rare)

Crisis Situations Requiring Immediate Medical Intervention

- Severe uncontrollable bleeding
- Difficulty breathing/Excessive panting
- Blue gums and/or tongue
- Sudden collapse
- Uncontrollable vomiting/diarrhea
- Seizures

What Is It?

Nasal tumors account for approximately 1% or less of all feline tumors. Of this small percentage, most of the tumors are malignant (cancerous) and locally invasive with a low rate of metastasis (spread). While the presence of detectable metastasis at the time of diagnosis is low, most cats do have evidence of metastasis by the time of death. Nasal cancer, categorized by the location of growth, can affect the nasal planum (top of the nose) and the nasal cavities (inside the nose). The most common location of feline nasal tumor development is within the nasal cavities, which tend to become affected by carcinomas and sarcomas. All cats are susceptible to nasal tumors but those exposed to environmental air toxins are over-represented.

Diagnosis

Due to the ability of the nasal tumor to hide and grow without causing significant symptoms, such as nose bleeds, facial deformity, and bulging of typically one eye, early detection is difficult. Often, as the early symptoms mimic common illnesses such as a cold, antibiotics may provide temporary relief though the tumor is the undiagnosed cause. Once advanced symptoms are noticed the suspicion of nasal cancer heightens, and further investigation should be pursued. Common diagnostic tests and procedures include bloodwork and urinalysis, a sedated oral exam, x-rays, a nasal scope, and nasal biopsy under anesthesia. Additional diagnostics include lymph node biopsies, MRI, and a CT scan to determine possible spread, a definitive diagnosis, and plan for possible treatment.

Treatment and Management

Treatment is generally focused on either short term pain and symptom palliation, or attempting to chronically manage the tumor through aggressive therapy. A complete cure is blunted by the close proximity of important sensitive structures (eyes, mouth, brain) that may be in harm's way if surgery and radiation are too aggressive. However, radiation remains the primary choice of therapy, often applied over several weeks. Chemotherapy alone is relatively unsuccessful but used in more experimental trials, often with radiation. Significant side effects, such as ulceration of the mouth, pain, and infection are possible. With the exception of advanced treatments, pain management, infection control with antibiotics and other palliative and hospice options are possible. This is often achieved with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, opioids, neurological pain medication, and topical and intra-nasal treatment. Antibiotics, steroids, anti-histamines, medicated creams and sprays can all help provide temporary relief in specific situations.

Prognosis

Nasal cancers that have responded to targeted radiation therapy have the best prognosis with an average survival time of 6 months to over 2 years reported. Unfortunately, feline nasal tumor research is sparse and much remains unknown about treatment options and prognoses. In general, the presence of consistent nasal bleeding and metastatic disease quickly worsens the prognosis. Without any treatment, the prognosis is very guarded

Continued



LapofLove.com

Content may not be reproduced without written consent from Lap of Love International, Inc.

Nasal Tumors in Cats

A Brief Guide • Part of the Educational Pet Disease Series from Lap of Love

continued from page 1

and expected survival time is weeks to a few months. Several experimental options, such as chemotherapy combined with radiation, freezing the tumor, and others have shown promise in small groups but tend to be expensive and lack research. Nasal lymphoma reportedly has the best response to therapy. Consult with your veterinarian and a veterinary oncologist to learn all your options and construct a comprehensive individualized plan for your pet and your family.

LapofLove.com

Content may not be reproduced without written consent from Lap of Love International, Inc.

Management Tips

Consider providing:

- Easily accessible food and water
- Access to "safe" quiet areas
- Warm, soft sleeping areas
- Natural calming products
- Canned food over dry
- Proactive pain management
- Air purifier for air quality

Try to:

- Be consistent with medicating
- Proactively manage pain
- Track appetite, weight, energy etc.
- Track the good days vs. the bad days
- Limit stress (kids, noise)
- Use gentle handling at all times
- Groom around the face and eyes
- Trim nails to prevent scratching
- Use a medicated salve/powder from your veterinarian around raw areas
- Keep inside
- Have supplies for nose bleeds
- Use a bulb syringe to clear nostrils
- Limit fumes, smoke, and scents
- Provide humidity in dry weather

Before your pet's condition becomes unmanageable or they are losing quality of life, it is important to begin end-of-life care discussions. Learn about pet hospice care and/or euthanasia services in your area so you are prepared.