Article Link: https://cats.fandom.com/wiki/Cancer\_in\_cats/

# Cancer in cats

Similarly to humans, cancer, or specifically cat cancer, is the leading cause of death among older and more elderly cats. It accounts for approximately 50% of deaths each year but can be successfully treated if diagnosed early. The medical science that studies cancer in animals is called veterinary oncology and veterinarians that specialize in cancer diagnosis and treatment are called veterinary oncologists.

## Four Common Types of Cat Cancer[]

There are various types of feline cancer. We have compiled a short list here, meant only to serve as an introduction to some of the more common types of feline cancer. If you suspect your cat may have cancer, please schedule an appointment with one of our veterinarians.

Lumps underneath the skin do not always indicate cancerous tumors in cats. It is also possible to find what seems like the symptoms described above without the presence of cancer. Therefore, if your cat is exhibiting any of these symptoms, we recommend making an appointment at Metropolitan Veterinary Center immediately. Avoid the urge to make your own diagnosis. Diagnose with the help of your veterinarian, who can accurately diagnose cat cancer or another potentially dangerous illness or condition that might be developing in your feline friend. The list includes:

* Mast cell tumors - Mast cells are white blood cells. Occasionally, they can become tumors, which are abnormal swellings. They may be benign or malignant - in many cases they are benign. The only way to know for sure is to make an appointment with your veterinarian and we’ll take a sample for testing. The cause isn’t known, however, we do know that there are higher incidences in Siamese cats.Lymphoma - As you may know, lymphoma is a type of blood cancer. It develops in the lymph nodes and causes them to swell. The lymphatic system is responsible for maintaining the flow of fluids throughout the body including cleansing toxins which means cancerous cells can be circulating throughout your pet’s body. Experts believe one way cats get lymphoma is through exposure to the Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV). Luckily, an effective vaccination for Feline Leukemia Virus is available to help reduce this risk.Squamous cell carcinoma - Squamous cells are the type of cells that form your pet’s skin. When you look at them closely, they have tiny lines resembling fish scales. These cells also line interior passages of the respiratory and digestive tracts. These cells can develop cancer in your cat’s mouth or in her body. In the mouth, you might see sores and his breath may smell bad. Experts relate it to exposure to secondhand smoke. If your cat develops sores on the skin that won’t heal, that could be a sign of skin cancer. This is another form of squamous cell carcinoma. In either instance, book an appointment for your cat for an examination.Bone Cancer - The signs of this cancer include lameness, swelling, and lethargy. It is fairly rare but tends to be aggressive. Current evidence doesn’t show a reason for cats developing this type of cancer though we do know it’s more common in larger and giant breed cats.
* Ceruminous Adenomas - These small tumors are dark blue, brown, or black and are usually confined to the external ear canal.Myeloproliferative tumors - Genetic and can be passed on through reproduction. It affects the bone marrow and blood. Symptoms include weakness, labored breathing, pale mucous membranes, and a loss of appetite.Melanoma tumors are basal cell tumors - They are not very common in cats but can occur nonetheless. They usually are found around the neck, head, ears, and shoulders of cats. They are mostly benign and form solid lumps underneath the skin.Osteosarcoma tumors - These tumors affect the bones, joints, and lungs. These tumors can lead to swelling, lameness, coughing, and breathing difficulties. Diagnostic tools include X-Rays and biopsies.Fibrosarcomas tumors - These tumors occur in the fibrous tissue just beneath a cat's skin. They can appear as solid, irregular masses underneath the skin. A biopsy is the most accurate diagnostic tool.

## Diagnosing and Treating Cancer in Cats[]

At Veterinary centers, they understand that feline cancer is a devastating diagnosis. It is natural to feel a range of emotions that may include fear, sadness, and anger.  However, a cat cancer diagnosis is not necessarily a hopeless one. Depending upon how early it is identified and the type of cancer involved, there are options that can lead to very positive outcomes that may even include a cure.

The veterinarians and support staff in veterinarian offices are highly trained, empathetic, and understanding of the fact that it is necessary to focus on both the emotional and medical aspects of treating cats with cancer. We are here to work with you to make sure you have a good understanding of your cat's illness and to help you make decisions that will be best for you and your cat.

## How Common is Cancer in Cats?[]

Similar to human beings, cancer in cats is a leading cause of death among older felines. Although the specific causes of most cancers in cats are currently unknown, many experts consider the feline leukemia virus (FeLV) to be a contributor to cases of cat lymphoma. Other factors that might increase cat cancer include toxins from the environment, second-hand smoke, and environmental toxins.

It is important for you to understand that depending on the specific circumstances of your cat's condition, feline cancer may be treatable. Medical advancements have provided us with more treatment options for cats with cancer. However, the best way to prevent cancer in cats is to emphasize a healthy lifestyle and adhere to a preventive health care regimen. This includes scheduling regular wellness checkups with your veterinarian.

## Spotting Cat Cancer Symptoms[]

First and foremost, fighting cancer in cats begins with spotting symptoms of the disease while it is still in the early stages. However, spotting symptoms can be tricky because cats are very good at hiding illness. Many forms of cat cancer can be externally noticed. Therefore, periodically inspecting your feline friend is key to spotting cancer symptoms. Some of the more common cat cancer symptoms include:

* Any lump that changes shape or sizeAny sore that does not healChange in bowel or bladder habitsDifficulty eating or swallowingDifficulty urinating or defecatingUnexplained bleeding or discharge from the bodyVomiting and/or DiarrheaLoss of appetiteChronic weight lossDifficulty breathing or coughingStiffnessOral odor

Should you spot any symptoms, we urge you to schedule an appointment at Metropolitan Veterinary Center immediately. Only then can we perform the necessary diagnostic tests to determine whether or not cancer is present, and to what extent. Cat cancer can be aggressive, requiring immediate intervention. If cancer is diagnosed early, the prognosis for certain cancer recovery increases significantly.

## Cancer Treatment for Cats[]

The first key to cancer treatment for cats is a proper diagnosis. At Metropolitan Veterinary Center, we begin with a full physical exam. We then often recommend blood work, radiographs, and ultrasound.  We may also perform a fine needle aspirate (FNA), which is a form of biopsy where a needle is inserted into the tumor to collect cells for use in determining tumor type. This is a non-painful and minimally invasive method used for diagnosis. The limitation of an FNA is that needle size is very small and therefore may not be representative of the sample  Therefore, some tumor types require a biopsy for diagnosis. There are different types of biopsies and our veterinarians will be happy to discuss this further with you.  In certain cases, we may refer your cat to a cat cancer specialist, for further diagnostic testing (such as MRI and CT scans) and to be part of our team in treating your cat's cancer.

Communication with you is important throughout the process of diagnosis and treatment. This includes discussing all possible cancer treatment options for your cat, and the various possible outcomes. Our number one concern is the best interest of your cat. We also evaluate the costs involved, your expectations, possible lifestyle changes, and any possible side effects of treatment to ensure that you are able to make informed decisions.

Treating cancer in cats vary greatly depending on the location and stage of cat cancer. Traditional cat cancer treatments may involve:

* Oral medicationIntravenous chemotherapyRadiation therapySurgical reduction or removal of the tumorAncillary pain management

Complementary treatments may include acupuncture, immunotherapy, herbal medicines, and nutritional therapy.

Fortunately, for all the unknowns where cat cancer is concerned, we do know more about cancer in cats now than we ever have before and because of this, you now have more options than ever when pursuing cat cancer treatment.

## What to Do if You Suspect Your Cat Has Cancer[]

If you are worried your cat may have cancer, whether finding a lump or noticing behavioral changes, please contact us immediately to schedule an appointment. Our veterinarians and veterinary support staff will provide you and your feline friend with compassionate, comprehensive care and support services. Although a diagnosis that your cat has cancer can be frightening, we are here to help ease your cat's pain and suffering and treat your cat's cancer through the best veterinary care available.

## Navigation[]