

Oncology Explained

“Our primary goal is compassionate care for veterinary cancer patients”

Owners:

The oncology team at AERA values the human-animal bond, understanding that it is difficult to learn that one’s pet has cancer. We are dedicated to fully and completely educating each owner about each pet’s form of cancer.

With the diagnosis that each pet has, the biological behavior, treatment options and various prognoses will be discussed. Some of the treatments discussed may include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, gene vaccine therapy and/or surgery. We will assist the owner to select the best course of treatment for their pets and their families.

Chemotherapy

Our oncologists use chemotherapy to treat cancer in three basic yet different ways. The first use of chemotherapy is that it offers the best opportunity for remission of certain types of cancers such as lymphoma. Next, chemotherapy can also help to prevent the metastasis (spread) of malignant cancers after surgical removal, such as bone cancers. Finally a third use for chemotherapy is to help improve the quality of life (palliation) for patients which are not amenable to surgical removal or have already metastasized.

If chemotherapy is elected as a treatment option, it is administered at Animal Emergency and Referral Associates on an appointment only basis. Each appointment will take each owner approximately thirty minutes from the time they walk in until the time they leave. Appointments are typically on an outpatient basis Monday through Friday. Drop off appointments are available at no extra charge if our appointment times do not meet the needs of the client. During each appointment we will ask a history of how the pet has been doing, perform a physical exam and then speak with each owner regarding their pet’s progress, answering any questions that they may have.

Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy is a form of local therapy used to treat cancer and other diseases. Some cancers respond very well to radiation and can be cured. However, not all cancers are amenable to radiation. An oncologist will discuss this with the owner along with the prognosis and length of treatment as this varies for each type of cancer. Our oncologists will work in conjunction with veterinarians boarded in Veterinary Radiation Oncology, Medical Oncology and Internal Medicine to establish a plan that is appropriate for each pet’s disease.

If radiation therapy is elected as a treatment option, it is performed in Clifton at The Veterinary MRI and Radiotherapy Center of New Jersey. Much like chemotherapy, radiation therapy is performed on an outpatient basis, and each appointment is typically thirty minutes in length from the time the owner walks in the door until the time they walk out. Again, drop off appointments are available at no extra charge if the appointment schedule does not meet

the needs of the client. The veterinary MRI and Radiotherapy Center of New Jersey is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm.

Gene Vaccine Therapy

Within the last few years, Merial has acquired a gene vaccine used to treat Canine Melanoma. Initially it was devised to treat oral (mucosal) melanomas. With continued studies and successes, digital (toe) and dermal (skin) melanomas can also respond. The vaccine has limited FDA approval, in that it may only be administered by a board certified veterinary oncologist. This option may be discussed with you if your dog had been diagnosed with melanoma. As with our chemotherapy and radiation therapy visits, your appointment would typically last thirty minutes from the time you arrive until the time you depart.

Cancers Commonly Treated

- Lymphoma, Lymphosarcoma
- Mast Cell Tumors
- Mammary Gland Tumors
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas
- Thyroid Tumors
- Hemangiosarcomas
- Brain Tumors
- Oral Tumors
- Bone Tumors
- Gastrointestinal Tumors
- Melanomas
- Leukemias (Chronic/Acute)
- Bladder Tumors
- Nasal Tumors
- Lung Tumors
- Histiocytic Tumors
- Vaccine Associated Sarcomas

Current Studies/Clinical Trials

Periodically, we are pleased to be able to offer various clinical trials for our patients. Our goal is to improve the life of our patients while advancing veterinary medicine. Some of the trials we have available are offered as a first line of treatment, others are considered after conventional therapy has already been employed.

Please consult the oncology team for more information as protocols may change.