



The tumor mass is often white on the cut surface, and the capsule is thinned.

Microscopically, malignant cells have replaced normal cells and destroyed the normal architecture of the lymph node.

## Canine Lymphosarcoma

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Blood work  
X-rays  
Urinalysis  
Biopsy of tissues  
Cell studies  
Endoscopy  
Exploratory surgery  
Examinations of chest and abdominal fluid  
Bone marrow biopsy  
Cerebral spinal fluid examination

### Therapeutic Plan

Supportive therapy  
Chemotherapy  
Surgical excision  
Radiation

### Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement or disease.

## Canine Lymphosarcoma

Your dog has lymphosarcoma. Lymphosarcoma is a cancer of your pet's lymphatic system. The signs you see and the treatment your veterinarian prescribes depend on where the tumors are located. Anemia, weight loss, appetite loss and organ failure are commonly seen. This client education sheet will help you learn more about lymphosarcoma and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

## What You Should Know About Canine Lymphosarcoma

The lymphatic system is a network of capillaries and vessels that filter and return fluids picked up in the body to the blood stream. Lymphoid tissue is present in most tissues, including the spleen and bone marrow. The tonsils are part of the lymphatic system, as are the lymph nodes, which are found throughout the body.

Lymphosarcoma is cancer of the lymphatic tissue. Although lymphosarcoma may occur in any organ, it occurs with greatest frequency in the spleen, liver, lymph nodes, chest and the digestive tract. Lymphosarcoma can also occur in the skin, spinal cord and eye. Leukemia, which is a malignant disease of the blood stream and bone marrow, occurs in some dogs with lymphosarcoma.

### **Causes**

The exact cause of all cases of lymphosarcoma isn't known, but a viral cause is suspected in some species. Genetic predisposition and a defective immune system may also be involved.

## Diagnosis

Your veterinarian may need to perform several tests to establish a diagnosis, determine which organs are affected, and monitor response to therapy. Some tumors of superficial lymph nodes (those underneath the skin) and those in the abdomen can be felt, as can an enlarged spleen, liver, and sometimes intestinal tract. Tumors of the tonsils can be found during an oral exam. Altered chest sounds may provide a clue to chest tumors. Blood tests, urinalyses, X-rays of the chest and abdomen, ultrasound, a bone marrow evaluation and a biopsy of enlarged organs are all very useful procedures. Examining biopsy specimens with the aid of a microscope or finding abnormal cells in the blood or bone marrow can confirm the diagnosis.

## Treatment and Home Care

Canine lymphosarcoma is isn't curable, but therapy can reduce the severity of clinical signs and add quality to your pet's life. Most lymphosarcomas are managed with chemotherapy. Decreased tumor size and diminished signs (remission) occur in up to 80 percent of dogs given chemotherapy. Some animals survive a year or more after the onset of therapy.

The response to treatment depends on how advanced the disease is and whether other problems are present, such as kidney failure caused by the elevated blood calcium levels associated with lymphosarcoma.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications, coaxing your pet to eat, monitoring the incision for swelling or drainage if surgery was performed and watching for the recurrence of clinical signs. Your veterinarian will schedule follow-up appointments and lab tests to monitor your pet's progress.

## Nutritional Plan

If your dog has lymphosarcoma, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, clinical signs, the treatment protocol and the organs and body systems principally affected by the tumor tissue. Many debilitated and surgical patients benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy to help correct nutrient deficiencies and replenish body stores. The high protein, high fat and low carbohydrate levels of Hill's® Prescription Diet® n/d® Canine dog food provides the protein and energy your pet needs as well as the high arginine and omega fatty acids that stimulate the immune system. Alternatively, Prescription Diet® a/d® Canine/Feline Critical Care pet food may be useful when assisted feeding is necessary.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.