

LUMPECTOMIES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

A large part of what we do everyday is checking out "lumps" in our patients.

Masses can appear on any part of the head or body (even in the eye), can be fast or slow growing, benign or malignant, hairless or hairy, pink or dark in colour and most are not painful to your pet. Some lumps have been present for years (these are usually less likely to be nasty) whilst some lumps grow fast and can become irritating for the pet.



Dog eye mass



Dog leg mass

An annual wellness check is a great opportunity for your vet to perform a tip to tail examination, feeling for any unusual lumps. We also rely on pet owners to carefully examine their pets regularly picking up any unusual mass. Most lumps we find, we will sample to see what they are, then and there in the consult. No long wait lists as with humans. A diagnosis allows us to understand how a particular tumour behaves, the options we have for treatment and prognosis for the pet. This procedure is called an FNA (fine needle aspirate) and is usually done with your pet in the consult. Very rarely do we need to sedate the pet, unless of course the mass is situated on a delicate area like the eye. If your pet is anxious we can administer oral medications that decrease anxiety and nervousness and allow us to get our sample. A slide is prepared from the cells retrieved and we either microscopically examine it in house or we send to an external lab for diagnosis. We typically get results back in 48 hours.

Occasionally some masses don't readily exfoliate cells, so a biopsy under sedation is then recommended. (A wedge of the mass is collected for histology).

Many lumps we examine are benign and some can be left alone, with no concern for potential spread. We recommend removing some benign masses if they are growing rapidly, in awkward places making mobility difficult, or are ulcerated, infected and painful. Sometimes when we are doing another procedure like a dental, we can remove some unsightly masses at the same time. Commonly seen benign masses in your pets are Lipomas (fat masses), Sebaceous adenoma, Follicular cysts, Basal cell tumours, Skin tags, Epulis (proliferative gum), Cutaneous histiocytoma, and Perianal adenomas.

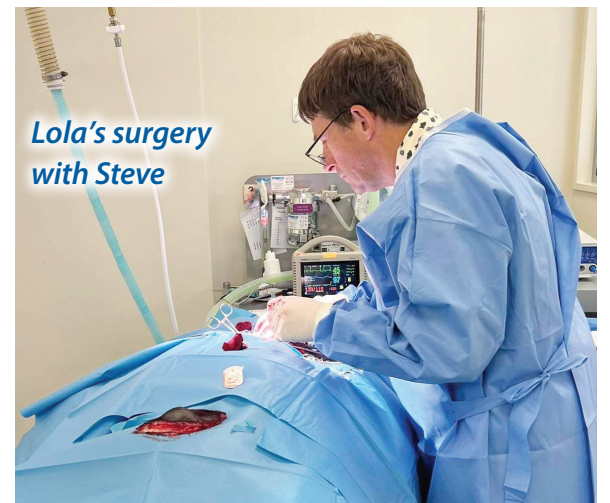
With malignant masses you **CAN'T** adopt the wait and see approach. They can arise from any tissue in the body, some are locally invasive and slow to spread while others metastasise early. Common malignant tumours we see in our pets are Lymphoma, Mast cell tumour, Osteosarcoma, Oral malignant melanomas, Hemangiosarcomas, Anal sac adenocarcinomas, Transitional carcinoma of the bladder, Histiocytic sarcomas and soft tissue sarcomas. Many of these can't be cured but diagnosed and treated early, significantly affects mean survival times, reduction of pain and a better quality of life.



Lola with the CT machine

More imaging (Ultrasound, CT exam or sentinel node mapping via radiography) is usually recommended before the primary surgical procedure to see if this tumour has spread and popped up in other areas of the body (namely the liver, spleen, draining lymph nodes or lungs). This information dictates whether surgery is going to be straight forward, or more complicated (with metastatic disease removed) or whether surgery is the right thing to do at all. We perform sentinel node mapping and Ultrasonography at McMaster & Heap and can organise a CT in a few days at Pacific Radiology Group.

Our surgical recommendation would be removal of the entire mass with wide surgical margins (laterally and deep) and histopathology on the lump. Once we know the classification of the tumour, we can work out the BEST plan of attack. It's important to know the tumour grade and stage, the mitotic rate (which tells us how aggressive this tumour is), that our surgical margins were clean and whether it looks like its invaded the blood vessels. The more information we know means we can give the client different options on how to best treat based on financial



considerations, what the owner and patient can tolerate with respect to chemotherapy and home care and how the client can manage treatment if they live out of Christchurch.

Dr Kirsty Thompson is passionate and very skilled in Small Animal Oncology. Kirsty has upskilled over the years doing numerous courses and attending conferences to educate herself in an always developing field. Kirsty also has an excellent working relationship with Veterinary Oncology Consultants in Australia.

Kirsty will consult Referral Oncology cases from Christchurch

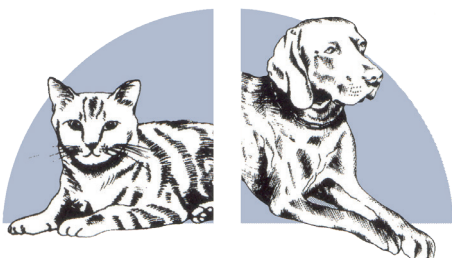
practices plus those around the South Island. Kirsty is involved from start to finish, organising the ultrasound or CT examinations, performing radiography and sentinel node mapping to surgical removal of the tumour. She is also a believer in Chemotherapy treatment for the RIGHT cancer in the RIGHT patient.



We do a wide range of Chemotherapy treatments at McMaster & Heap Vet Practice. Working closely with Kirsty is her trained Chemotherapy nurse Leeann. Kirsty and Leeann provide exceptional patient and client care that can extend months to years in some lucky patients. Building lasting relationships based on trust, kindness and honesty is an integral part of these treatments. Chemotherapy in animals is different to humans, although similar drugs are used. Only 10-20% of pet patients experience minimal side effects. These are usually managed on an outpatient basis. Chemotherapy drugs are administered either intravenously or orally and we are fully set up to administer these drugs safely, adhering the Best Practice Cytotoxic Regulations.

For more information on cancer diagnosis and treatments, please feel free to give us a call. Ultimately, quality of life is the priority for our much loved pets and Kirsty and her team are available to help you with this as much as possible.

Dr Michele McMaster, August 2026



McMASTER & HEAP
VETERINARY PRACTICE



OPEN 7 DAYS Cnr Hoon Hay & Coppel Place. Ph: 338 2534
E. reception@mcmasterandheap.co.nz www.mcmasterheap.co.nz