

Feline Lymphoma Therapy

Lymphoma is a cancer of lymph cells. The intestines are the most common source of lymphoma in cats. These cells are found throughout the body and may affect any organ in the body. There are two types of lymphoma. A slower growing type called small cell lymphoma. The larger more rapidly growing cells are called large cell lymphoma or lymphoblastic lymphoma.

Diagnosis:

1. Intestinal ultrasound- if the measurement of the intestine is enlarged, then something is wrong with the intestine- usually the diagnosis is IBD or lymphoma.
2. Intestinal biopsies with surgery- are the only accurate way to verify the diagnosis of lymphoma. Endoscopy is not accurate in the diagnosis of lymphoma, and ultrasound guided aspirates may give false results.
3. Bloodwork is checked to rule out other diseases. Occasionally lymphoma is caused by viral infections.

Standard Treatment Protocol:

1. Prednisolone or Monthly Depo-Medrol injections- these are a type of cortisone that help suppress the lymphoid cells. This also has the additional benefits of stimulating the appetite and helps reduce inflammation with arthritis. Some side effects with cortisone products include liver failure, diabetes, immunosuppression, etc. The prednisolone is given daily for life (5-10 mg per cat), or the depo-medrol is given monthly for life.
2. Lomustine- This chemotherapy is given once every 28 days (monthly) in the hospital. This medication can affect the white blood cells; therefore, a CBC is checked each month prior to administering the medication. If the WBC is low we will hold off on the medication for 2-4 weeks. This medication is given monthly for 6 months, then every other month for life.
3. Fortiflora- This probiotic and digestive enzyme helps reduce infections in the intestine that can occur secondary to the lymphoma and aids in digestion, this is recommended with each feeding for 60 days, then every other day for life.
4. Vitamin B 12- B vitamins are poorly absorbed with intestinal lymphoma; therefore, additional B vitamins are recommended when your cat has this type of cancer. We recommend injections 2 times per week for one month, then weekly for one month, then monthly for life. We can teach you how to give these injections or we could add Pet-Tinic to the food 2 times daily for life.
5. High Protein Diet- We recommend M/D or D/M for life. Cancer does not grow as well with high protein, low carb diet.
6. High Omega 3 fatty acids (DHA)- We recommend adding welactin to the food daily, as the high dose of omega 3 fatty acids help slow cancer growth and reduce inflammation.

Additional Therapies that can be added to your cat's protocol:

1. Hoxsey formula- this is a herbal cancer therapy that is used to decrease the growth of the cancer. It is overall safe and is given daily for life.
2. Convenia- Antibiotic injection that is used to treat secondary infections that may arise while your pet is on immunosuppressive medication. This is commonly used for respiratory infections, bladder infection, sinus infections.
3. Fiber or Vetasyl- This is commonly added to help with defecation if your cat is developing constipation.
4. LTCl- Lymphocyte T-Cell Immunomodulator can be used to help with lymphoma therapy. For more information check this website <http://tocyte.com/lhci-product-info-feline-leukemia/>
5. Cerenia- This product can be used to help prevent vomiting and nausea. Typically, when used long term this is given for 5 days, then not given for 2 days of each week.

Prognosis and Costs:

The cost and prognosis of every case of cancer can vary from animal to animal.

The cost of cortisone injection, lomustine, CBC, recheck exam, vitamin B injections, fortiflora, and omega fatty acids is approximately 250 dollars per month for the first 6 months, then an average of 100 dollars per month for life. The high protein food (m/d or DM) is approximately 50 additional dollars per month. With small cell lymphoma we expect 75% of cat to achieve remission and will live for 1-3 years before the lymphoma returns. Throughout the treatment period some of the medications and test may be changed or adjusted.