

## Nasal Tumors in Dogs and Cats

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The nose is an often-underappreciated organ. The nose of a dog and a cat is a vital sensory organ. The sense of smell is primary, but the nose also plays a role in appetite stimulation and behavior. The nose also filters air and helps to protect the lungs from harmful substances.

Tumors of the nose in dogs make up about 1-2% of all cancers and are even less common in cats. Approximately 80% of the time they are malignant. The most common nasal tumors in dogs are Adenocarcinomas, and in cats, they are Squamous Cell Carcinomas. They tend to spread within the nose primarily, but eventually, they can spread to other areas of the body.

There is no easy answer as to what causes cancer of the nose. The tumors seem to be more prevalent in long-nosed breeds of dogs. Cigarette smoke and living in an urban environment where air pollution is prevalent are significant influencers. Hereditary factors are thought to play a role. Cats with histories of feline leukemia virus or feline immunodeficiency virus may be predisposed to developing Lymphoma, including nasal Lymphoma.

Signs that there may be a problem include:

- Listlessness, inappetence and weight loss
- Nasal discharge is a common sign. It can be a clear discharge, cloudy, and even bloody. Often the discharge is from just one side of the nose.
- Excessive sneezing would suggest something is irritating the nasal area.
- Rubbing the face and nose can also suggest irritation.
- Open-mouth breathing is common as the tumor begins to block the nasal passages.
- Bleeding that is hard to stop.
- Seizures can occur if the growth extends into the bone surrounding the brain.

Making a diagnosis requires an examination, blood work, X-rays, and possibly a CT-Scan. If the nasal passages are large enough to look inside with instruments, the tumor may be visible, and a biopsy may be possible.

Treatment is difficult. Surgery alone rarely gets all of the tumor. Radiation followed by surgery usually has a better outcome. Radiation alone is often the best form of treatment.

There are different types of radiation, but all have the potential of killing the cancer cells and at the same time damaging healthy tissue. Newer forms of radiation known as Stereotactic Radiation (SRS/SRT) can provide higher doses of radiation in a more precise location, which less risk of normal tissue damage.

If the tumor diagnosis is Lymphoma, chemotherapy is usually the treatment of choice, since this disease usually involves the whole body.

As with all forms of cancer, a healthy, natural diet that focuses on immune support, and optimum nutrition are essential. A diet that includes small amounts of carbohydrates (cancer cells love carbohydrates), high levels of protein and fat, probiotics and Omega 3 fats along with a stress-free safe and healthy environment, are essential.

If your pet is suffering with any of the many forms of cancer, be sure to discuss proper diet with any of the staff at your favorite [Pet Planet store](#).

The prognosis for nasal cancers in both dogs and cats varies with each individual case. The goal is to extend the pet's lifetime and maintain a good quality of life for as long as possible. Pets receiving the advanced radiation range from 6-18 months depending on the type of cancer and how advanced the cancer was when first diagnosed.

Additional Resources:

[https://www.petmd.com/blogs/fullyvetted/2012/aug/nasal\\_tumors\\_slow\\_and\\_insidious\\_killers-26882](https://www.petmd.com/blogs/fullyvetted/2012/aug/nasal_tumors_slow_and_insidious_killers-26882)

<https://smallanimal.vethospital.ufl.edu/clinical-services/oncology/types-of-cancer-and-treatment/nasal-tumors-dogs/>