



## McMASTER & HEAP VETERINARY PRACTICE

# LYMPHOMA

Moya is a beautiful 4yr old Bull Mastiff cross who until earlier this year had been a perfectly healthy young dog. Her owners had noticed that over the past few days she hadn't been quite her normal bouncy self, had gone off her food and developed a swelling under her throat. They brought her to the clinic and although on examination she seemed quite well she not only had enlarged lymph nodes around her neck but also around the front of her shoulders and at the back of her hind legs. Causes of this could be infection, an allergic reaction, immune mediated disease (where the body kills off its own cells) or cancer. Fine needles aspirates (FNA's) were taken of Moya's lymph nodes and sent to a veterinary laboratory. Taking an FNA is a painless procedure and in the majority of animals can be done without sedation. A small needle is inserted into the tissue that you want to sample and a small amount of cells are collected and put onto a slide.

Unfortunately, the results that came back from the laboratory confirmed that Moya had a malignant form of cancer known as Lymphoma. This form of cancer is one of the most commonly seen in dogs and often involves multiple organs around the body. To find out where the cancer had spread to Moya had blood tests and thoracic and abdominal x-rays and ultrasound scans performed. The Lymphoma had spread to organs within her chest and abdomen as well as within her lymph nodes – she had high stage B cell-Lymphoma.

The results were discussed with her owners who decided that they would like to go ahead with treating her further. With this type of Lymphoma treatment is not surgical, but medical; usually with chemotherapy. We are in contact with a number of specialist Veterinary Oncology clinics in Australia and we contacted them straight away. Within 24 hours they had produced an entire report on Moya, her cancer and different chemotherapy options that they recommended. These treatment options varied from palliative care with steroids through to multi-drug chemotherapy options. Moya's family decided to go ahead with the preferred primary treatment option lasting 15 weeks.

Moya started her chemotherapy the following day coming into the clinic every Friday for a blood test to check her red and white blood cell levels and for administration of her drugs intravenously. Throughout the entire duration of treatment, she was very well behaved and tolerated the chemotherapy drugs extremely well, with hardly any noticeable side effects. She was always ready for her treats and walk after her drugs had been given!

At the end of the 15 weeks Moya was in complete remission and four weeks later still appears to be. Her owners report that



she is better than ever and when she visited last week she was rolling around as normal for her tummy to be tickling whilst we were trying to take her blood test! There is a chance that the Lymphoma will come back but for the moment she is happy, has a new lease of life and is enjoying her time at home with her family.

Informing a client that their special friend has a form of cancer, is one of the awful parts of my job. It is such a dreaded disease with often fatal consequences and often at the time of diagnosis, the disease has well advanced. Due

to many cancers having malignant potential, speed of diagnosis and treatment is necessary to have any chance of remission. Many hard decisions have to be made and that is when you can rely on us to do our job. We have the necessary skills and diagnostics to diagnose the type of cancer your pet has and then we employ the specialized services of Oncology consultants in Australia to get the most successful chemotherapy protocol for your pet. That's often the hardest part as the administration of chemotherapy usually goes really smoothly. Pets rarely have side effects, the drugs are painless if given properly, your pet is treated as an outpatient and we often see improvement quickly, if we are going to be successful. I have first hand experience in the process as my beautiful dog Lola developed kidney cancer last year and received four rounds of chemo. If anyone wants to discuss the process of cancer diagnosis and treatment for your pet, please give the clinic a call.



**OPEN 7 DAYS**

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