



## McMASTER & HEAP VETERINARY PRACTICE

### My Girl Lola

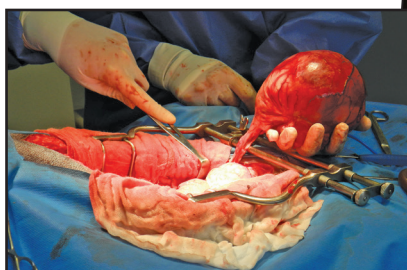
In my line of work, occasionally I am the bearer of bad news to clients but very rarely am I on the receiving end, which I can tell you hurts deep.

Recently my loving, loyal friend "Lola" was diagnosed with a primary malignant kidney tumour, purely by chance. She is a five year old black Labrador, huntaway cross who has always had excellent health, except for occasional cracked pads. She was completely symptom free, spending hours walking, playing with the boys and running with Steve in the hills. She always ate ravenously everything given to her, drinking was normal and she never appeared in pain.

One evening after being out in the Cashmere hills with Steve, she started vomiting. We suspected garbage as she runs off the lead, and being a Labrador has an incredible nose for discarded food. We whisked her to work late that night to receive intravenous fluids and medications to help her nausea and vomiting. We radiographed her abdomen just to rule out a bone obstruction, not that she gets bones from us, but she has a great nose for hunting them out. That's when we saw a huge circular mass in her cranial abdomen.

My heart sank – I knew this wasn't her stomach but I couldn't believe she'd have a tumour as she had appeared so well and was so young.

Catherine was called in on her day off



to ultrasound Lola. My worst fears were realized. It appeared to be a large tumour and Catherine thought it was involving her left kidney. Within 24 hours she was at St Georges awaiting a CT scan to rule out spread of the tumour to other parts of her body. She was amazing – she knew I was sad and she was so well behaved. She also knew she was in trouble as she let Steve and I just take care of her. She was sedated to be CT scanned and unfortunately the left kidney had a massive tumour associated with it but luckily no further tumour spread could be seen.

She needed urgent surgery and Steve and myself felt we couldn't operate on her. We called upon Damien at Vetspecs, who was just brilliant and Lola really trusted him. The surgery took approximately two hours and Lola was a true star. The surgeon had completely removed the diseased cancerous left kidney and a lymph node close by just in case the cancer had spread there. Lola's cancer was a rare Leiomyosarcoma with the potential to metastasize. Lola was so incredibly brave and even though she was sore (her surgical



cut was

about 40cm long), she still tried to act normally at home and at the clinic. She wasn't great at being looked after as she was always looking after all of us. She was allowed on any sofa or chair and had complete access to everywhere in our house – even the Abbysinnians cut her slack.

Lola is now undergoing six sessions of chemotherapy three weeks apart, just in case there are cancerous cells lurking in her bloodstream. Sarah is Lola's chemotherapy nurse who administers her drugs intravenously every Wednesday. Sarah worked in a Specialist Oncology small animal clinic in Melbourne, so is professional and skilled at administering

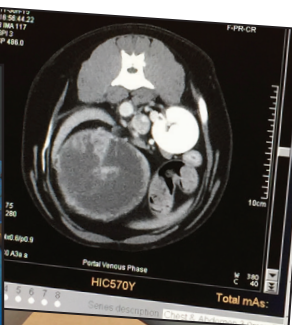
these drugs.

After her first treatment she was really unwell, even refusing food but now we have a regime of medications to help her feel better after the drugs are administered. Sarah checks her hemogram (checking her red and white blood cells) before and after every treatment. We also need to check her

kidney enzymes regularly as she only has one kidney now. I'm feeding her a lower protein kidney diet just to support her remaining kidney especially during her chemotherapy.

I feel so fortunate we found this tumour in time. It could have gone un-noticed for months until it was too late to save her. She is an amazing family member, special friend and companion to so many patients that walk through our doors. It would be true to say she is adored and loved by hundreds of clients and has way more friends than Steve and I according to Facebook. If she could speak she'd want to live as long as she could with us all, so chemotherapy is the only way forward. I will keep you posted on her progress and thank you to all my special clients and our amazing staff who have been concerned for Lola and I.

Dr Michele McMaster



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Find us on  
**Facebook**

**Cnr Hoon Hay & Coppell Place  
Phone 338 2534, Fax 339 8624**

**E. mcmasterandheap@yahoo.co.nz  
www.mcmasterheap.co.nz**



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