



McMASTER & HEAP
VETERINARY PRACTICE

Brain tumour in a cat

This is a remarkable story where an 13 year old Norwegian Forest cat " Sashenka" was diagnosed via CT imaging of having a brain tumour, "Meningioma" and successfully had surgery two weeks ago in a specialist hospital in Auckland to remove the tumour. Never in 30 years of being a vet have I had a client willing to proceed to surgery to remove a brain tumour in their pet, plus she survived and is thriving. She's one very lucky cat with incredibly caring owners who wanted the best possible outcome for their precious cat.



Sashenka first presented just before Christmas being a bit "off" - more clingy, vocalising more, seeming to have trouble going up and down stairs, difficulty navigating obstacles, seeming disorientated, scratching the wooden floor boards, pacing, kneading and off balance sometimes. She was a cat always up a tree and she stopped doing this. She wasn't chasing her treats and started walking in circles. She was never seen seizing though and continued eating.

We examined Sashenka and ran an extensive array of blood and urine tests, X-rays and ultrasound examinations. We saw her 15 times in about three weeks. All testing was basically normal. We tried different medications and she stayed in the hospital on IV fluids but we couldn't get a of handle on her diagnosis and there was no improvement at home. Her owner saw a different Sashenka than the cat we saw at the clinic.

We consulted the services of Feline consultants and specialists but she was deteriorating quickly, having difficulty eating and appeared dull and not responsive to her owners at times. Steroid injections showed improvement but her bizarre behaviours did wax and wane with her worse clinical symptom being close to comatosed. We decided to CT Sashenka to find out what was really going on. We offer MRI (Forte Health) and CT (Pacific Radiology at Lincoln) at McMaster & Heap. The patients are sedated and the images taken from

very fancy expensive computers. It's painless for the pet and can give us many answers that other means of testing can't deliver. The radiologist diagnosed Sashenka with a large intracranial brain lesion , most probably a meningioma. Other differentials included a glioma or astrocytoma.

We consulted an experienced surgical team in Auckland who were keen to take over her case. After lengthy discussions with the owners it was decided to push forward with brain surgery, so Sashenka and her devoted owners headed to Auckland. Brain surgery isn't a walk in the park and more tests had to be carried out on Sashenka. She was getting very used to needles now and thermometers?? She had an MRI before the surgery and a CT after the surgery to confirm position of the titanium screws used to secure her cranium back in place. She received a blood transfusion on the day of the surgery and had an oesophageal feeding tube placed so that we were able to supply her nutritionally post surgery, in case she didn't feel like eating. Once the tumour was removed it measured 2.6cm x 3cm x 1.2cm - quite sizeable. She made an excellent recovery from her anaesthetic and stayed in the specialist hospital to be closely monitored for a few days.

She had very specific discharge instructions including cage confinement for four weeks (an impossible requirement for Sashenka), physiotherapy on her back muscles and legs and medications including steroids, pain relief and antibiotics. Catherine has seen her recently and she appears to be doing really well - she even escaped her cage and was seen running up a tree - her favourite place to be, a birds eye view of life.



Day 1 after the surgery.

The tumour may grow back and Catherine is exploring chemotherapy options but for now Sashenka has her full, active life back again which is great news for everybody. She may pave the way in the future for other patients with brain tumours. Thank you to Sashenkas mum and dad for allowing me to write this article on her.

Dr Michele McMaster

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