

# NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF ONCOLOGY

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## Canine Lymphoma (LSA)

Canine LSA is the most common canine cancer. It is also one of the most treatable cancers, having excellent responses to therapy with prolonged survival times. This month I have compiled some information and facts about LSA that every owner of a dog with LSA should know.



- LSA is a disease of middle age; average age of onset is 6 to 9 years.
- Golden Retrievers, Rottweilers, Boxers, Bull Mastiffs, Saint Bernards, and Bassett Hounds appear to have a high incidence of LSA.
- No infectious, environmental or other lying cause has been found. Though a previous diagnosis of ITP is considered a risk factor the future development of LSA.
- The most common forms of LSA are multi-centric (84%), GI (7%), atypical locations (7%), mediastinal (2%).
- Common paraneoplastic syndromes include hypercalcemia, anemia, and thrombocytopenia.
- Staging determines the extent of disease in the body and includes blood work, abdominal ultrasound, chest radiographs and bone marrow aspiration.
- Prognostic factors include, immunophenotype (T cell, worse than B cell), stage (the lower the stage the better), sub-stage (A, not ill at diagnosis is better than B, ill at diagnosis), hypercalcemia is a negative prognostic indicator and is usually associated with T cell LSA.
- GI LSA, in dogs, carries a particularly poor prognosis of 14 weeks. GI LSA is usually T cell.
- LSA is usually diagnosed by cytology but may require a biopsy for histology.
- LSA is a cancer of the immune system, which is everywhere. This is why chemotherapy, a treatment that can go everywhere, is the standard of care.
- Various chemotherapy protocols have been described. The more intensive the therapy the higher the response and the longer the remission.
- The Gold Standard for care is the Madison-Wisconsin protocol. This protocol has a 90% remission rate with a median survival time of 13 months. Twenty-five per cent of dogs treated with this protocol will survive beyond 2 years. Cure rate is low at 1-3%.
- With no treatment, the average survival time is 45 days from the day of diagnosis.
- Palliation with prednisone offers little survival advantage, but will help maintain quality of life. The median survival time with prednisone therapy is 60 days.
- The use of prednisone alone will “turn on” the P-glycoprotein (PGP) multi-drug resistance (MRD) gene, which will cause the LSA cells to become resistant to many types of chemotherapy.
- Other chemotherapy protocols have median survival times ranging from 90 days to 7 months.
- LSA is very chemotherapy responsive and even when LSA comes out of remission, we can usually get it back into remission at least 2 more times.
- In general each remission is half as long as the previous remission.
- Many clients will ask about dietary changes for dogs with LSA. There has been only a small survival advantage reported only for dogs with Stage IIIa LSA. The validity of this work is now in question and dietary changes are not considered part of the treatment recommendations.
- Lymphoma is a cancer that should “not be given up on.” Often, even after a treatment failure, remission can be achieved with extended survival times.

**DR. KEVIN FINORA IS A BOARD CERTIFIED ONCOLOGIST AND SMALL ANIMAL INTERNIST. HE SEES PATIENTS WEDNESDAY (INCLUDING EVENINGS) TO SATURDAY AT VEC/RC SOUTH. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT DR. FINORA IF YOU HAVE ANY CANCER RELATED QUESTIONS.**

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