

Tumors of the Upper Jaw

Surgery Service



**Michigan Veterinary
Specialistssm**

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We Can Help

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- Neurosurgery
- Oncology
- Oncologic Surgery
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Radiology & Fluoroscopy
- Soft Tissue Surgery
- Ultrasound

Locations

Auburn Hills

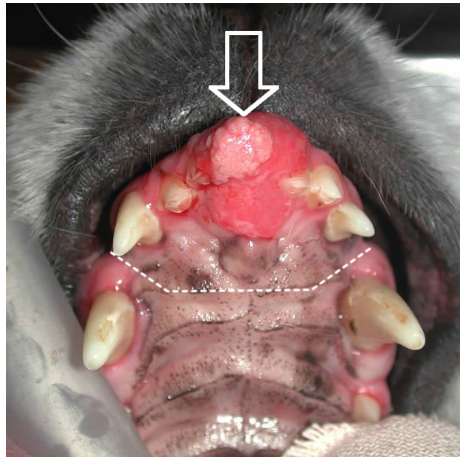
3412 E. Walton Blvd.
(West of Squirrel Rd.)
(248) 371-3713

Grand Rapids

1425 Michigan St. NE
(East of Fuller Rd.)
(616) 284-5300

MVS Southfield

29080 Inkster Rd.
(North of 12 Mile Rd.)
(248) 354-6660



What are oral tumors?

Oral tumors arise from both soft tissue and bony structures within the mouth and can include less common locations such as the tongue and tonsils. These are the fourth most common type of cancer in dogs. They can be either benign and cured with surgical removal or malignant and require more aggressive therapy including surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation. General categories of tumors include the epulides (fibromatous, ossifying, and acanthomatous), locally invasive malignant tumors (fibrosarcoma, soft tissue sarcoma, and squamous cell carcinoma), and malignant tumors that have a higher rate of spreading to other parts of the body (melanoma, osteosarcoma).

Diagnosis

A complete blood count, complete biochemical profile, and urinalysis are performed before surgery to check internal organ health. Chest x-rays are used to help rule out the possibility of visible spread of the cancer to the lungs; please note that microscopic spread of tumor to the lungs cannot be detected with x-rays. X-rays of the tumor site may help determine if the tumor invades into the bone. A CT scan of the jaw may also be recommended to further evaluate the extent of the tumor. Enlarged lymph nodes will be checked for spread of cancer via biopsy. Depending on the size of the mass and its location, a fine needle aspirate or incisional (wedge) biopsy may be performed under general anesthesia. Sometimes these biopsy tests do not give an accurate diagnosis, therefore only after the entire tumor is removed and studied by a pathologist can a final diagnosis be made.

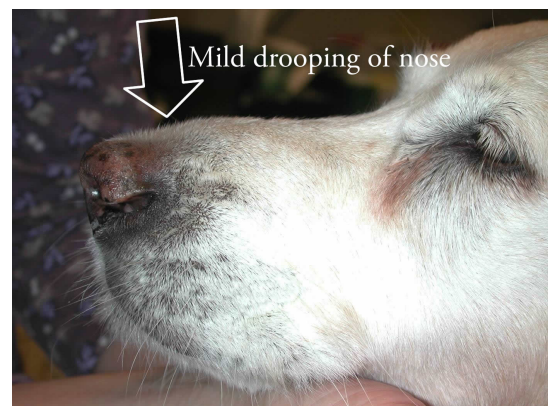
The day of surgery

Our anesthesia and surgical team will prescribe a pain management program, both during and after surgery that will keep your companion comfortable. This will include a combination of general anesthesia, injectable analgesics, oral analgesics and anti-inflammatory medication.

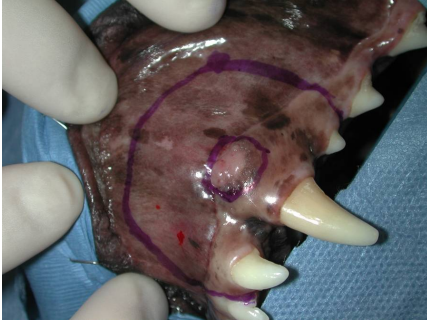
Treatment

The goal of surgery is to remove the entire tumor with curative intent. Removal of any part of the upper jawbone is termed a maxillectomy. The amount of the jaw that is removed is dependant on the size and location of the tumor. There can be instances where massive amounts of the upper jawbone need to be removed despite removing such a large portion of the jaw; the cosmetic outcome is very good in most cases (see photo right).

If your companion has a tumor that tends to



Tumors of the Upper Jaw Continued...



spread (metastasizes), chemotherapy will be recommended and is administered every third week for a total of five treatments. Unlike humans, most dogs do not lose their hair and usually have only mild side effects, which may include transient loss of appetite and vomiting. Certain types of tumors cannot be cured with surgery alone, therefore radiation therapy is needed to help delay the regrowth of residual cancer cells in the

mouth. Radiation is administered daily (Monday through Friday) until 18 to 21 treatments have been completed.



Aftercare and results

After surgery, you can give your pet a prescribed pain reliever to minimize discomfort. Feeding canned dog food for the first 3 weeks will also minimize discomfort and risk of injury to the surgical site. After a meal, the mouth should be rinsed out using a syringe and either water or an antiseptic dental rinse such as chlorhexidine oral solution. Chewing toys and roughhousing with other pets and strenuous activity may cause breakdown of the surgical site, therefore is discouraged for three weeks after surgery. The face will swell after surgery and this can be minimized by applying a cold compress to the facial region, 20 minutes per session, four times daily for the first three days.

The prognosis for your companion is dependant on biopsy results, location, and size of the tumor. In general, tumors located on the front part of the jaw have a better prognosis. The oncologist will discuss the prognosis for your pet and need for additional treatments after the final biopsy results are available.



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Tumors of the Upper Jaw Continued...

Assessment and recommendations

Patient: _____ Date: _____

Treatment

- Additional diagnostic tests are recommended prior to surgery
- Surgery is recommended to remove the tumor by a surgeon at MVS

The following has been prescribed

- No medications or special diet are necessary at this time
- Diet: _____
- Avoid chew toys or other hard treats that may cause the tumor to bleed
- Antibiotic: _____
- Other medication: _____

Exercise

- Unlimited
- Confine your pet to the house other than very short leash walk necessary for bowel movements and urination
- Restrict exercise to leash walks 10 minutes twice daily

Preparation for surgery

- Start fasting your companion at midnight before the surgery; water should not be withheld
- Pepcid AC 10 mg tablets: give _____ tablet(s) with water (use a syringe if needed) at 6 AM on the day of surgery

*Composed by Daniel A. Degner, DVM, DACVS
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