



Fibrosarcoma

Occurrences of 10-20%, oral fibrosarcoma are the 3rd most common oral tumor in dogs with the median age for diagnosis 7-8 years. Tumors arise from gingiva and can be difficult to diagnose. First indication of oral cancer is the mass itself. Since the oral cavity is a difficult place for owners to observe, most patients will have presented to their veterinarian with a secondary complaint, such as halitosis, bleeding from the mouth or nose, difficulty eating, painful swallowing, weight loss or excessive salivation.

Fibrosarcomas are locally invasive. They tend to destroy/invade the bone where the tumor is located. Metastasis or spreading to other parts of the body can occur in 19-22% of lymph nodes and 6-27% of lungs in dogs. Another type of oral fibrosarcoma may be referred to as a histological low grade but biologically high grade. We see this type most commonly in Golden Retrievers. This tumor does not follow the “typical” appearance of a fibrosarcoma but is extremely aggressive.

Treatment options and prognosis are dependent on location, size and stage of the tumor. Biopsies of the tumor and lymph nodes will determine tumor type and stage. Dental radiographs will determine how much bone resorption/invasion has occurred. Pre-operative chest radiographs, computed tomography (CT), and/or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may be recommended.

Wide surgical excision is the treatment of choice. Additional radiation therapy maybe recommended but is considered palliative. At this time chemotherapy is not effective against oral fibrosarcomas.

Surgical treatment alone median survival rate is about 1 year with reoccurrence of the tumor. Using a combination of surgery and radiation therapy, local reoccurrence has been noted in 32% of dogs with a median survival time of 18 to 26 months. The best prognosis for oral fibrosarcomas is early detection and surgical treatment. Dogs with fibrosarcomas can be managed with proper treatment and care.