



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2014 NEWSLETTER

FELINE LUMPS, BUMPS, AND GROWTHS

Regularly inspecting your kitty's skin is important, both at home and during a visit with your veterinarian. A careful exam may reveal lumps, bumps, or growths of various sizes or shapes. These can be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

Sometimes lumps are very small, such as a tiny mass between the toes, around the ears or eyes, or hidden under your kitty's fur. Other masses may not be quite so small; some masses are actually abscesses or cysts. All should be further examined.

There are two primary ways we evaluate a mass. The first is by fine needle aspirate. To do this, we insert a needle into a surgically-prepared area of the mass, and then use suction to obtain cells or fluid. The sample is put on a microscope slide and sent to a pathologist for evaluation. The pathologist provides an interpretation of the cells and the most-likely underlying cause.

Although a fine needle aspirate is often an effective diagnostic tool, sometimes a particular tumor may not be shedding cells so doesn't provide useful pathology information. In a case like this, we move on to the next option: biopsy and histopathology (microscopic examination of tissue).

A biopsy is performed under local or general anesthesia. After surgical prep, we make an incision and retrieve a tissue sample, which is then sent to a pathologist. The pathologist reviews the tissue sample, typically providing a more definitive diagnosis.

As with any diagnostic procedure, in some cases it can be hard to obtain a definitive diagnosis on certain kinds of tumors. It is ideal to obtain multiple samples of the mass if it is large enough and if the kitty is appropriately sedated/anesthetized.

Although benign masses (tumors) begin as a "non-threat" to the body, as the cells change over time, they can become malignant. Tumors are capable of aggressive growth, and even if not cancerous, can become a hindrance to your kitty's movement. Malignant tumors must be removed to avoid the spread of cancer.

During your kitty's annual wellness exam, your veterinarian will look for lumps or bumps, but it's also important for you to do regular skin checks at home. Once a month, give your cat a nose-to-tail exam. Slowly run your hands up and down your kitty's entire body, pressing lightly as you go, looking for any sign of swelling, lumps, or scabs. Other things to watch for are an open sore that won't heal or a mole that is beginning to spread or ulcerate. Check your kitty's back, sides, neck, head, under the chin, and chest. Check all four legs, under the armpits, and (if your kitty is cooperative) the belly. Don't forget the tail!

If you do locate any kind of lump, bump, or sore, please contact our office right away and schedule your kitty for an examination.

FELINE ABSCESSES

Spring is in the air, and with the warmer weather, outdoor kitties may begin roaming.

Although we recommend that your kitty be kept indoors, if he or she does venture out, it's always a possibility that an unfamiliar kitty may be encountered. This could ultimately lead to a cat fight, which in turn could lead to wounds that, if not treated, can become abscessed.

Although abscesses can occur in many different ways—and virtually any kind of wound or infection can ultimately result in an abscess—abscesses are most often caused by bacterial contamination of a puncture wound like a scratch or bite.

The skin over a puncture wound can heal quickly on the outside, trapping bacteria inside and causing an infection to form. Eventually an abscess may rupture and discharge pus onto the skin's surface. If medical treatment to control the infection is not provided, the skin opening may heal over and the cycle will begin again.

When an abscess is not properly treated, bacterial infection can spread into surrounding tissue and eventually through the entire body via the bloodstream. This type of blood poisoning can become life-threatening.

Abscess treatment typically involves draining and cleaning the infected area, plus dispensing antibiotics to treat the source of the infection and kill the bacteria.

If your kitty is experiencing areas of the skin that are painful, swollen, or hot to the touch, or if you notice discharge from a wound area, please seek immediate veterinary care.

THANK YOU!

As many of our friends know, our Benevolent Fund raises funds to care for disadvantaged kitties who otherwise might not receive appropriate medical attention and treatment. The Fund also provides the kitties with food, shelter, and ongoing care while they await their forever home.

We'd like to express our sincere thanks to our supporters and donors who make it possible for us to perform this work and allow us to continue helping as many kitties as possible. We couldn't do it without you!

APRIL SPECIAL OFFER

Through April 30, receive **\$10 off** when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a feline wellness examination. Please ask us for details.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our team members.

Sacramento Cat Hospital • 4115 Manzanita Avenue, Carmichael • (916) 488-4161 • info@sacramentocathospital.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SacramentoCatHospital