

- potential exposure to the chemotherapy agent.
- Keep out of reach of children at all times, children should not come into contact with your pet's chemotherapy drugs
- If you're trying to conceive, are pregnant, breastfeeding or immuno-suppressed we advise you not to handle these medications.

We will discuss tablet administration with you and give advice on what to do if you are unable to tablet your pet or if your pet vomits after administration (re-dosing may be required). Please contact the practice if you need further support.

Chemotherapy at home

A percentage of the chemotherapy drug administered to your pet will be excreted in their bodily fluids. Extreme care needs to be taken to avoid contact with your pet's urine, faeces, vomit and saliva for up to 72 hours after they have had a chemotherapy treatment. **Gloves must be worn to clean up all accidents and wash hands thoroughly after use**, during this time.

Try to encourage urination on the grass or in litter trays. Ideally your dog should be kept to their garden but if you have to take them out for a walk to go to the toilet, choose a low-traffic, minimal socialising area to avoid coming into contact with other people or animals. High absorbent cat litter is advisable but only if your cat is already used to it. It is also advisable to use litter tray liners and newspaper before filling the tray with cat litter. This will help minimise any aerosols and human contact when you clean their litter tray. It is advisable to clean out litter trays thoroughly after each use for the first 72 hours, wearing gloves and using disposable cloths or paper towels. Follow the disposal advice below. If your pet has an accident in the house follow the same procedure, wash the area thoroughly and dispose of waste.

1. **Always wear gloves and use disposable cloths or paper towel to clean up after your pet.**
2. **When cleaning up avoid aerosolising any of the chemotherapy agent through the use of pressure washers /hoses or in the case of litter trays under a running tap**
3. **Excrement can be flushed down the toilet or put in a sealable plastic bag, place this in a bag so the waste is double-bagged and disposed of in your general rubbish (this is also advised for the contents of your cat's litter tray and any materials used to clean up after your pet).**
4. **Soiled bedding should be washed and rinsed twice using a high temperature setting**

Petting and stroking of your pet is fine, but avoid any attempts to lick you. If you come into contact with their saliva wash your hands. Be extra vigilant with: children, anyone trying to conceive, pregnant and breastfeeding women or immuno-suppressed people, as any of your pet's bodily fluid can contain the chemotherapy waste product in the first 72 hours.

Diets

Patients are more likely to suffer from obesity than weight loss, however in some cases weight loss can be induced by the cancer or the treatment. Your vet and nurse will monitor your pet's weight and provide you with advice on how to increase your pet's calorie intake if required. We will advise you of the correct diet for your pet, especially where other medical issues are of a concern, e.g. kidney disease. In many situations, if your pet is eating their normal food well, it may be best to continue this. If your pet is not eating, we would suggest tempting your pet to eat with their favourite foods, warming this can make their food more palatable. If your pet is disinterested it would be advisable to feed a diet which; is highly palatable to encourage eating, contains high protein and high fat content to prevent weight and muscle loss, containing low carbohydrate levels to starve the tumour of its energy source. There are several veterinary diets suitable for dogs and cat receiving chemotherapy and you may be advised to feed this to your pet.

Communication

If you have made the decision to proceed with treatment for your pet, it is essential you monitor and report any physical or mental changes. In particular monitor your pet for any changes in their normal behaviour; urination, defecation, vomiting, appetite and mobility. Do not ignore any changes as it may be possible for us to alter the type of treatment to improve your pet's quality of life. We believe that quality of life is the most important outcome for any medical treatment, but perhaps especially for cancer treatment. If you have any doubts about proceeding, or pursuing with treatment, at any stage, please don't hesitate to talk to us.

Our hope is that together we can find the best possible treatment plan for your pet.

OPENING TIMES

The practice is open during the times below. Our appointments run throughout the day, please ring and speak to a receptionist. In the advent of an emergency outside of these times, ring **01376 325511** to speak to our vet on call.

Braintree

Monday - Friday - 8am - 8pm
Saturday - 8am - 6pm
t. **01376 325511**

Coggeshall

Monday - 8.45am - 10.30am; 4.45pm - 6.30pm
Tuesday - 8.45am - 12.15pm;
(Cat Only Clinic 11am - 12pm)
Wednesday - Thursday - 8.45am - 10.30am;
4.45pm - 6.30pm
Friday - Saturday - 8.45am - 10.30am
t. **01376 561667**



Millennium Way Braintree Essex CM7 3GX
t: **01376 325511** w: www.millenniumvets.co.uk

Also at:
30 West Street Coggeshall Essex CO6 1NS
t: **01376 561667**

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Your Pet & Cancer Management



Chemotherapy Management

At Millennium Veterinary Practice we are entirely dedicated to improving the health and welfare of our patients. In pursuit of this aim, we have invested in providing the best possible approach to diagnosis and compassionate treatment of cancer. We understand that this is a distressing time and are here to offer support, high quality diagnosis and the best possible treatment. The following information aims to explain your pet's treatment and if you have any further questions or would like to discuss your pet's individual needs then please contact us. Our oncology department is led by veterinary surgeon Stefaan Van Poucke and supported by our dedicated oncology registered veterinary nurse.

What is cancer?

The term 'cancer' is used to describe the growth of abnormal masses as a result of the uncontrolled multiplication of cells. The following terminology is commonly used:

- Benign - mass that does not spread or invade other areas
- Malignant – ability to invade surrounding tissues and/or spread to other parts of the body
- Grade – determines how quickly and/or aggressively the tumour may spread
- Stage – determines the extent, size and degree of tumours

In the vast majority of cases, we simply do not know what would have led to the development of your pet's cancer; therefore it would be impossible to prevent.

Can cancer be treated?

There are many treatment options available for individual patients. Our aim is to use the most suitable treatment for your pet to provide a prolonged good quality of life, free from unnecessary suffering. Unfortunately, it is

necessary to acknowledge that sadly euthanasia may have to be considered in some cases.

What we offer

At Millennium, we have many diagnostic aids to help us determine the type and extent of your pet's cancer. Your vet will discuss the most suitable investigations available for your individual pet's needs. This can include:

- Radiography, ultrasound or computed tomography (CT) scans to locate the position of the mass and rule out secondary spread
- Fine needle aspirates can be taken of the mass to gather cells which will then be interpreted under the microscope
- Biopsies may also be required for more detailed information

Surgery may be an option to completely remove all cancerous cells, however if this is not possible (due to spread of the cancer to other tissues) surgery may be advised to control symptoms depending on the general health of your pet and the location, grade and stage of the cancer.

Are there any side effects?

Fortunately the majority of dogs and cats receiving cancer treatments do not experience side effects comparable to humans and their general quality of life is surprisingly good. Pets very rarely lose their hair; but regrowth after clipping may be slow. The chemotherapy agents we use on pets are similar to those used in humans, but doses are generally much lower. Therefore minimising side effects. As part of your pet's treatment plan they may be given steroid medication, (injection or tablets). This can increase their drinking, appetite and urination but will reduce then stop when your pet is weaned off their steroid medication.

The following are occasionally seen;

- Digestive upset
- Decreased appetite
- Loose stools
- Nausea and vomiting

Normally, these signs can be easily treated with medication, bland diets and rest, but you should always contact us for advice.

Diarrhoea can occur; however this is often mild and short lived. If diarrhoea persists, if severe, contains blood, or your pet seems weak and/or depressed, contact the practice. Vomiting can occur at any time throughout the chemotherapy course. If the vomiting is repetitive, contains blood, or your pet seems weak and/or depressed, contact the practice.

Nausea can occur 1-3 days after treatment; however this is often short lived and usually requires no treatment.

Nausea can often lead to loss of appetite; if this occurs tempt your pet to eat with their favourite foods, (see Diets).

Fever and sepsis can occur due to the body's immune system being suppressed temporarily by chemotherapy. In extremely rare cases septicaemia may develop which can lead to shock, and can potentially be fatal if not treated rapidly. Fever and sepsis are a very rare complication of chemotherapy.

It is vital you are aware of the signs of fever and sepsis. Contact the practice immediately if you notice the following:
high temperature
extreme lethargy or weakness
anorexia
severe vomiting and/or diarrhoea
pale 'sticky' gums

What happens on the day?

Before chemotherapy treatment starts you will have a consultation with a vet to discuss your pet's treatment plan and any concerns you may have. Chemotherapy treatment is usually an outpatient procedure and your pet will need an admission appointment with a member of our nursing team on the day of treatment. We will need to ask questions regarding your pet's physical and mental health, your pet's normal routine and diet and if they have had chemotherapy before - any potential problems noted from previous treatments. Your pet will have a physical examination performed by the vet and a blood sample will usually be taken to evaluate your pet's white blood cell count, as these can be affected by chemotherapy. (Blood cells produced by the bone marrow are highly sensitive to chemotherapy; for this reason your vet will perform regular blood tests throughout your pet's chemotherapy course.) In most cases your pet will stay with us for a couple of hours. We will suggest a time for you to call for an update and to arrange a time to collect your pet; rarely will your pet have to stay overnight, but this is a possibility.

Types of chemotherapy drugs

Chemotherapy drugs can be administered by various routes. Orally in form of tablets, intravenously or subcutaneously (under the skin).

If oral tablets are dispensed for you to give at home, certain precautions must be followed:

Gloves should be worn when handling and administering the tablets.

- Tablets must be given whole – do not crush or split the tablet or let your pet bite into it when it is given. Doing so could cause the drug to be airborne causing

