



Your appointment is very important to all of us. We look forward to meeting you and your family. We realize that this is a very difficult time. It is a shock to find out a member of your family has cancer and to realize that you are responsible for choosing the best treatment for your pet. Cancer is the number one natural cause of death in geriatric cats and dogs, and it accounts for nearly 50% of pet deaths each year. However, it can also be a very treatable disease.

There are a few things we would like you to know prior to your appointment. The time allotted for your initial consultation with Dr. Elsa Beck or Dr. Conor McNeill is approximately one to two hours. You may need to allot up to two hours should any diagnostics be required and additional time if you elect to begin same-day treatments. At this time the oncologist will examine your pet, review your pet's history, radiographs, laboratory test results, and any other pertinent information. It is therefore critical that all relevant medical records be made available to the doctor at this time. Your family veterinarian will provide you with a copy of your pet's radiographs to bring with you to the initial appointment. We prefer that medical records be faxed to us prior to the appointment, so we can be adequately prepared for your visit.

The oncology team is dedicated to caring for your pet with skill and compassion. However, as the pet's primary care giver, you are in the best position to know and anticipate your pet's needs. We will provide all the information necessary for your pet's treatment, but feel free to use other resources as well. Our website, [www.hopecentervet.com](http://www.hopecentervet.com), contains some information, along with other suggested resources. However, our staff is specially trained to personalize the information to your family's individual situation. We believe knowledge will provide the basics for sound decisions.

**We encourage you to:**

- Write down questions you may have before each visit.
- Ask for printed materials or information: Obtain resources to help you better understand your pet's disease and treatment options.
- Understand that there are no incorrect decisions. Do not worry about what other people will think about your decisions. You know your pet better than anyone else. Once you have gathered the information you need, listen to your heart and you will make the decisions that are best for your individual situation.

***You can expect the following questions to be answered during your consultation.***

What is the name of my pet's tumor?

Is the tumor benign or malignant? How often does this type of tumor metastasize (spread to other parts of the body?)

If left untreated, what will the cancer likely do to my pet?

What diagnostic tests do we need to perform to determine the location and extent of the cancer?

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What are the treatment options and what are the costs, side effects, time involved, and effectiveness of each treatment.

***...Regarding your pet's pain management***

Is my pet in any discomfort?

Will the treatment of cancer cause pain in my pet?

Is pain management important here?

What happens if the pain is not resolved with the usual treatment?

***...Regarding your pet's nutrition***

Is there anything special my pet should eat?

What happens if my pet starts losing weight?

Can we prevent loss of appetite, dehydration, nausea, and discomfort?

What if my pet stops eating?

When should appetite stimulants be used?

A diagnosis of cancer can bring with it some overwhelming emotions, including a sense of loss of control and a sense of hopelessness. When facing the diagnosis of cancer in a beloved pet, you may feel the responsibility of making important life changing decisions for someone who relies totally on your judgment. Your pet not only shares your home, your life and experiences, but also your heart. The doctors and staff at The Hope Center Oncology Department are here to help you through the diagnosis, staging, treatment, and decision making process.

**Thank you very much for allowing us to care for your pet! If you have any questions or concerns please call us at 703-281-2277, Monday-Friday.**

**The doctors and staff of The Hope Center, Oncology Department**