

Feline Fibrosarcoma

What is fibrosarcoma?

Fibrosarcoma is a locally aggressive cancer of the soft tissues (typically skin) that is relatively common in cats. Published rates of occurrence range from 1/1,000 to 1/10,000 cats. The tumor is slow to metastasize, but is locally aggressive.

What organs does fibrosarcoma affect?

While fibrosarcoma can affect almost any soft tissue, the most common organ affected is the skin.

What causes fibrosarcoma?

Cancer is caused by a combination of environmental and genetic factors. While a specific cause may not be identified, many cats with fibrosarcoma have developed the tumor at a prior vaccine/injection site (VAS, vaccine-associated sarcoma).

What clinical signs does fibrosarcoma cause?

Most patients with fibrosarcoma present for a skin mass noted at a historical vaccine/injection site with no signs of discomfort or pain. In more advanced cases, cats can become dehydrated, lethargic, or anorexic.

What laboratory changes does fibrosarcoma cause?

Most patients with fibrosarcoma have no laboratory abnormalities. In more advanced disease, internal organ function may be affected.

What testing is recommended for fibrosarcoma patients?

In evaluating patients with fibrosarcoma, our primary concerns are to make certain there are no obvious metastatic lesions (spread of cancer) or other underlying diseases present that may affect treatment. Routine screening urinalysis, CBC and chemistry are performed to rule-out other underlying diseases. Thoracic radiographs are taken to evaluate for metastatic disease. Biopsy or aspiration of the tumor will also be required.

Most patients evaluated for fibrosarcoma will have the following tests:

- Chemistry profile
- Complete Blood Count (CBC)
- Urinalysis
- Tumor biopsy

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What treatment options are available for fibrosarcoma patients?

Surgery is the first-line treatment for fibrosarcoma. Because the tumor is locally aggressive, wide surgical margins are essential. Even with wide surgical margins, local recurrence is common. For this reason, adjuvant therapy is often indicated. Radiation therapy is the primary mode of recommended adjuvant therapy and may be performed prior to or after surgery. In addition to this, chemotherapy can have additional beneficial effects. The chemotherapy drugs used for this disease generally cause few evident side effects and are well tolerated. Please see our [chemotherapy handout](#) for more specific information on these drugs and the side effects that can be seen. The specific treatment plan will depend on the individual case and we will discuss the treatment options with you at the time of your appointment.

What is the prognosis with fibrosarcoma in cats?

Fibrosarcoma carries a varied prognosis. Small tumors with aggressive surgical resection may never recur. Larger tumors, or tumors that are incompletely resected, will certainly recur and become locally aggressive within a matter of months after surgery. With a combination of radiation, surgery, and chemotherapy, however, the long term prognosis is much improved with remission periods in the 2-3 year range. The prognosis depends on the history, clinical signs, and characteristics of the fibrosarcoma present. We will discuss the specifics of your cat's case at the time of your visit.