

Hemangiosarcoma, Skin

Basics

OVERVIEW

- Malignant tumor arising from blood vessel cells
- Primary tumor develops in skin or subcutaneous tissues
- Accounts for 14% of all hemangiosarcoma in dogs

SIGNALMENT

Species

- Dogs and cats
- Pit Bulls, boxers, German Shepherds affected more often
- Dermal Hemangiosarcoma seen in whippet, greyhound and related breeds
- Median age, 9 year; range 4.5-15.6 years

SIGNS

DERMAL

- Usually solitary mass but multiples possible
- Firm, raised dark nodules common on limbs, head, face, ears, groin and penis, nose and abdomen
- Lesions usually not ulcerative

SUBCUTANEOUS

- Usually single masses but multiples may occur
- Firm or soft masses with or without bruising
- Bleeding is common
- Masses usually larger than dermal tumors
- Back legs and groin commonly affected

CAUSES & RISK FACTORS

- Sun exposure associated with both types

DIAGNOSIS

- Blood tests usually normal



- X-rays of chest recommended to rule out internal spread to lungs
- Ultrasound of abdomen to detect masses in organs
- Cytology and Histopathology definitive for diagnosis

Treatment

SURGERY

- Aggressive surgical removal is treatment of choice and has a high cure rate
- Removal of small dermal masses will also prevent growth of larger masses
- Radiation therapy for large and difficult to remove masses

CHEMOTHERAPY

- Chemo is advised for deeper masses and an oncologist should be consulted
- Chemotherapy may significantly extend survival times
- Low-dose chemo may also be beneficial (piroxicam)

Follow-Up Care

PATIENT MONITORING

- Monitor for re-growth of masses and new growth as most dogs with significant sun exposure will have multiple masses over time
- Prevention and avoidance of sun exposure
- Spread to lungs possible with stage II and III HSA