

# INFORMATION FOR ONCOLOGY CLIENTS

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. UNPARALLELED EXPERTISE.



Dear Oncology Client,

Thank you for bringing your pet to Penn Vet Oncology for his or her cancer care. We have put together this summary of our policies so that you are prepared for what to expect during upcoming appointments.

## ***Scheduling future visits***

Please contact the Appointment Desk at **215-746-8387** to schedule future appointments for your pet. If you know that your pet will require weekly visits for his/her treatment, you can schedule many of these future appointments ahead of time for your convenience.

Pets with unscheduled visits may need to return on a later date or may be charged as an Emergency visit.

## ***Oncology recheck visit procedures***

The process for recheck visits through our service is different than our initial consult appointments. A treatment plan or recheck plan is typically recommended after the first extended visit. Therefore, for most recheck visits, a nurse or veterinary student will come to the lobby to greet you and your pet after you have checked in with the business office.

**Please have your yellow sheet completed**, so that we can collect all the pertinent information regarding your pet's status, side effects and refill needs. The oncologist in charge of your pet's care will call you with an update and discussion of the next treatment when the physical exam and the planned diagnostics have been completed. If there is a significant change in status the clinician will call to discuss additional tests and arrange for a face-to-face consultation for a thorough discussion whenever needed. Please note that although you will not speak with the veterinarian when you arrive with your pet, you will speak with him or her during your pet's time with us and/or when your pet is discharged to you.

**Your pet will be cared for by a team of oncologists and oncologists in training:** This approach means that multiple clinicians are often involved in the care of your pet, so you will very likely see different clinicians at subsequent visits. All the cases are discussed in teaching rounds in the afternoon, so your pet gets the benefit of the collective knowledge of the entire team!

## ***Duration***

The average length of time that your pet's recheck visit will take is 2-3 hours, sometimes longer depending on the diagnostic testing required; please make sure we can reach you by cell phone during this time. For your convenience, we offer a "drop-off" option as well. You can drop your pet off before 9am and pick him or her up in the afternoon. You can schedule this "drop-off" appointment when you speak with the Appointment Desk staff.

## ***Fasting***

Unless your pet is going to be sedated or have chest x-rays or an abdominal ultrasound performed, you do not have to fast your pet prior to his or her visit. If it is recommended that you fast your pet prior to an appointment, please do not feed him or her after 10 pm the night before the visit, but continue to allow access to water. If your pet should not be fasted due to a medical condition (like diabetes) or is taking daily medications, contact the Oncology Service to find out what can be arranged.

### ***Emergencies***

If your pet is experiencing problems during working hours (8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday) or you need to talk to one of the Oncology clinicians, please call the common oncology voice mail at **215-898-4805** and leave a message. An Oncology clinician or nurse will get back to you the same day. If your pet is experiencing serious problems after hours or during the weekend, please bring your pet in to the Emergency Service for evaluation. The phone number for the Emergency Service is **215-746-V911**. The Emergency Service at VHUP can contact the Oncology clinician on call if needed.

### ***Non-Oncology Related Procedures***

We are a specialty referral hospital, and our Oncology clinicians and nurses are trained to treat and manage your pet's cancer. Other routine care procedures (such as vaccination and heartworm testing) as well as ear cleaning, nail trims, and anal sac expression should be performed by your primary care veterinarian.

### ***Important advice to help us help you and your pet more efficiently***

Complete the yellow sheet, as it is especially important that you report side effects from the chemotherapy so we can make necessary adjustments in your pet's treatment plan.

In order for you to let us know about your medication refill needs, check your pets' pill bottles before you come. If you run low, please call for refills before the day of the last pill.

If you choose to have blood work performed by your primary care veterinarian, please make sure copies of the results are faxed to us at **215-573-6049** before your next appointment with us.

### ***Cleo's Group***

Our grief counselor, Michele Pich, leads a monthly support group for clients that own pets with chronic illnesses, including cancer. Cleo's Group usually meets on the third Thursday of each month from 12pm to 2pm in the RITC Conference Room. This group is a place to learn from each other, gain support, and help others through the experience of caring for a pet with chronic health concerns. It is an open forum for people to share tips, concerns, triumphs and losses. Light refreshments will be served. Please contact Michele Pich, our Grief Counselor at: [mpich@vet.upenn.edu](mailto:mpich@vet.upenn.edu) or **215-746-8247** for more information.

### ***How You Can Get Involved***

Help us fight cancer by supporting our research. Cancer is a common cause of illness and death in both dogs and cats; too many of our patients die from their cancer despite the best of our efforts. Only through continued research and research support can we change this outcome. The oncology service is actively involved in cancer research, including projects that focus on our own hospital patients only as well as multi-institutional and national clinical trials through our membership in the Comparative Oncology Trial Consortium. We would be happy to talk with you about our research and how you can contribute to the work we do. Thank you for choosing the Penn Vet Oncology Service. Together we can make a difference!