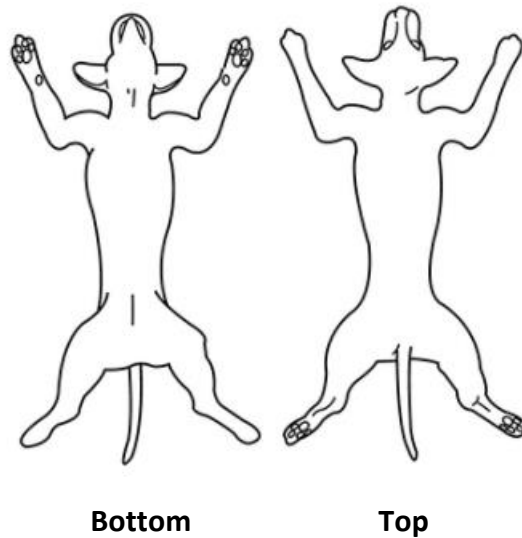


## Mast Cell Tumors

We have diagnosed a Mast Cell Tumor (MCT) on your dog. The tumor(s) is located approximately here on your dog.



### What are Mast Cell Tumors (MCTs)?

Mast cells are white blood cells that are part of the immune system. They are present in most tissues of the body and play a role in allergies and allergic reactions.

Mast Cell Tumors are mutations of mast cells. They are considered malignant (cancerous) and are the most common cutaneous (skin) tumors in dogs. They usually appear on the skin or just under the surface of the skin but can appear anywhere on the body.

Left untreated, a MCT can spread to the lymph nodes and other parts of the body. Since MCTs can look like other lumps and bumps, it is highly recommended to perform a fine needle aspirate (cytology) by inserting a needle into the tumor to remove a few cells and looking at those cells on a prepared slide under the microscope.

### So my dog has a MCT, what should I do?

There are a few options:

**Do nothing (not recommended):** a MCT is cancer. Left untreated the MCT may continue to grow and can rapidly spread to other parts of the body, causing serious disease and death.

**Surgical Removal:** Your dog is put under general anesthesia and the tumor is surgically removed. The wound is sutured and protected until the sutures are removed. To ensure that the tumor is fully removed, portions of normal tissue around and beneath the tumor (called margins) are also removed. Depending upon the location of the tumor, sometimes surgical removal of the tumor may not be possible and/or amputation may be necessary.

**Radiation/Chemotherapy:** Used in conjunction with surgery or when a MCT is suspected somewhere in the lymph nodes or body. Usually requires referral to a veterinary center that specializes in oncology

**Pharmaceutical management:** Your dog is given injections and/or oral medicines targeting the MCT. Here is what your veterinarian is recommending for this category:

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All of these approaches have positive benefits and potentially negative consequences. We encourage you to consider your options and feel free to ask us any questions.