

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

Squamous cell carcinomas are malignant tumours of skin cells seen mainly on sparsely haired areas such as the ear tips, nose and eyelids. Most cats are diagnosed in middle to old age, however any age can be affected. White cats or those with less pigment are more likely to be affected.

When the tumours first appear, they often look like a small red or black spot or a cauliflower like growth. As the growth progresses, these become sores or scabs that don't seem to heal. Cats may rub the area with their paws or rub on things causing the scabs to come off and the lesions to bleed. Not only is this very messy inside your house but can also be very confronting looking at your pet.

This type of tumour is often locally invasive and eats away at the tissue surrounding the lesion and in some cases spread can occur to the local lymph nodes (glands) or the lungs. This can result in your pet becoming very ill especially when secondary disease states occur such as infections and lung damage. These are life threatening.

Treatment is best undertaken early. When the lesions are small they can be frozen off using cryotherapy. In many cases, 6 monthly treatment can result in very good control of these cancers and prevent the need for surgery later in life.

Larger lesions need to be removed surgically, however lesions can regrow if not completely removed which is more likely to occur if lesions are too large. Another limiting factor to consider is the location as lesions are often close to eyes or on the front of the nose which are both areas less amenable to surgical intervention.

If the cancer has spread or complete removal is not possible, we can refer your pet to a specialist centre for radiation and/or chemotherapy. Pain relief medications may also be required especially if extensive surgery is needed.

If you have any further questions regarding your pet or these cancers, please contact the clinic on **53811996**.