Owner Fact Sheet: Feline Mammary Tumors

WHAT IS IT?

- A lump (or lumps) that arise in the breast area
- Mammary masses are rare in male cats
- Almost 90% of the masses will be malignant (bad)

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CAT?

If you feel a lump, make an appointment with your veterinarian to have it checked out, as soon as possible.

It is very important to seek veterinary advice early for even the smallest mammary mass.

WHAT SIGNS COULD MY PET HAVE?

Most animals do not present with clinical signs other than the painless lump(s) that are beneath the skin in the breast area.

DIAGNOSIS

Your veterinarian will discuss X-rays (and/or ultrasound) to evaluate tumor spread and may want to take tumor samples. The final diagnosis is confirmed with biopsy.

I HAVE A KITTEN. CAN I DO ANYTHING TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FUTURE MAMMARY TUMORS?

- Early neutering (< 1 year) reduces the risk in adult animals
- Avoid the routine use of contraceptives, because these medications increase the risk of developing mammary tumors

THERAPY

Surgery is the treatment option for most mammary masses and often all of the breast tissue needs to be removed. Some animals will need additional treatment after surgery.

PROGNOSIS

Variable. With smaller masses, rapid surgical removal of all the breast tissue may lead to cure.