

## Pet Owner: Hemangiosarcoma of the Spleen of Dogs

### BACKGROUND

- ▶ Hemangiosarcoma is a tumor of blood vessels, which can occur anywhere in the body.
- ▶ Hemangiosarcoma occurs most commonly in the spleen and rapidly spreads throughout the body.
- ▶ About 10% of dogs with hemangiosarcoma in the spleen also have hemangiosarcoma in their heart.

### CLINICAL SIGNS

- ▶ No clinical signs
- ▶ Mass felt on exam
- ▶ Distended abdomen
- ▶ Collapse

### DIAGNOSIS

- ▶ An ultrasound is used to identify a mass on the spleen. X-rays of the lungs identify tumor spread. A biopsy of the tumor is required to confirm the diagnosis and not all masses in the spleen are hemangiosarcoma. Some splenic masses are benign.

### TESTS YOUR VETERINARIAN WILL RECOMMEND

- ▶ If your veterinarian suspects hemangiosarcoma, in addition to x-rays and ultrasound, they may test the blood's ability to form clots before surgery.

### TREATMENT

- ▶ Surgery is the most important treatment for hemangiosarcoma. Urgent surgical removal of the spleen stops the bleeding and the spleen can be submitted to the laboratory for a biopsy. Chemotherapy can be administered to slow the tumor's spread. Veterinary cancer specialists may offer clinical trials of new treatments for this type of cancer.

### PROGNOSIS

- ▶ If the only treatment is surgical removal of the spleen, only 10% of dogs are alive one year later.
- ▶ If the spleen is removed and chemotherapy administered after surgery, 40% of dogs are alive one year later.

