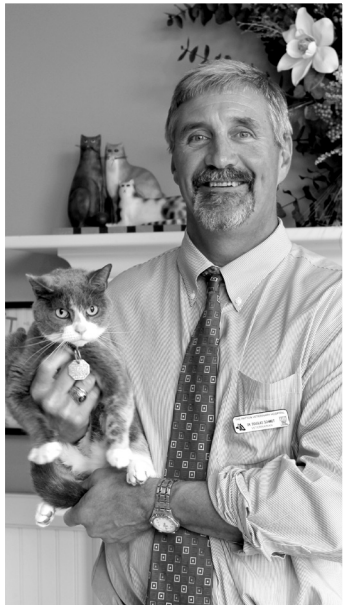


# ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



## *What is Hemangiosarcoma?*

Hemangiosarcoma, or HAS for short, is a cancerous tumor that originates from the lining of blood vessels known as the endothelium. Much more common in dogs than cats, older male German Shepherds and Golden Retrievers have a higher incidence of developing hemangiosarcomas than other breeds. These tumors are usually found on the spleen (about 50% of the time) or in the right atrium of the heart (25% incidence), however, they can also be found on or beneath the skin, and occasionally in the liver or other organs like bladder, kidney, etc. The cutaneous form, while still rare, seems to be more common in cats than splenic or cardiac tumors.

Symptoms of hemangiosarcoma are usually not apparent in the early stages. Many dogs experience sudden collapse, anemia and pale gums, and, sometimes a distended abdomen due to rupture or bleeding of splenic tumors. Dogs may die suddenly of a ruptured tumor due to massive blood loss or, in the case of a heart mass, due to sudden heart failure because of bleeding in the sac around the heart which prevents normal pumping of the heart.

Hemangiosarcoma of the spleen may be visible on radiograph (x-ray), though identification of specific tumor type requires biopsy of tissue or aspiration and examination of tissue cells under the microscope. Cardiac HAS may be visible on echocardiogram which is an ultrasound or sonogram picture of the heart. Skin tumors may be visible on the surface of the skin, or may be felt beneath the skin. Treatment typically involves surgical removal of the spleen (splenectomy) or surgical removal of cardiac tumors or skin tumors with or without adjunct chemotherapy. However, due to the aggressive nature of this type of tumor,

the average survival time, even with surgery and chemotherapy is anywhere from one to six months. Cutaneous or dermal hemangiosarcomas hold a better prognosis with complete removal but still have the potential to recur or spread to other organs like liver or lungs.

In summary, hemangiosarcoma is an aggressive tumor arising from blood vessels and most commonly found in the spleen. Diagnosis is based on clinical signs and radiographs or ultrasound and removal of the spleen is considered the treatment of choice, though long term survival is not common despite surgery & chemotherapy.



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