

PROSTATIC CANCER IN DOGS

Prostatic cancer is a relatively rare condition in dogs, accounting for less than 1% of all cancers. The most common type is **prostatic adenocarcinoma**, but other tumour types such as transitional cell carcinoma or sarcomas can also occur.

Prostatic cancer most often affects older male dogs and may be more common in desexed males. Certain breeds—including Scottish Terriers, Beagles, Dobermans, and German Shorthaired Pointers—may be predisposed.

Clinical Signs

Dogs with prostatic cancer commonly show signs related to the urinary and digestive tracts, such as:

- Straining to urinate (stranguria) or defecate (tenesmus)
- Frequent urination or blood in the urine
- Weight loss, lethargy, vomiting, or inappetence

In some cases, changes in the shape of the stool (flattened appearance) or signs of urinary obstruction may be noticed. Because this disease often spreads before diagnosis, systemic signs may also occur.

Diagnosis

Initial diagnostics typically include:

- Blood and urine tests
- Abdominal ultrasound or X-rays
- Urine culture
- Advanced imaging such as CT scans

A definitive diagnosis is made through collection of prostate or bladder tissue samples for cytology or histopathology, often via ultrasound-guided biopsy or cystoscopy.

Staging

Because prostatic tumours can spread to other parts of the body, additional imaging of the chest and abdominal organs is often performed to evaluate the extent of disease.

Treatment Options

1. Medical Management

- **Piroxicam**, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID), has anti-cancer properties and can help reduce inflammation and slow tumour growth. Gastrointestinal side effects and kidney damage are possible, so regular monitoring is essential.

2. Chemotherapy

- Drugs like **Mitoxantrone**, **Doxorubicin**, or **Carboplatin** may be used alongside Piroxicam. Side effects may include nausea, vomiting, and temporary suppression of the immune system. Blood tests are performed regularly to monitor for complications.
3. **Radiation Therapy**
 - Can be used to manage local pain or discomfort, especially in advanced disease. Radiation may cause irritation to surrounding tissues (e.g., bladder, rectum), and side effects may be acute or delayed.
 4. **Surgical Options**
 - Surgery may be considered in early-stage disease but is rarely performed due to high complication rates, including urinary or fecal incontinence. In advanced disease, surgery is generally not curative but may be palliative.
 5. **Palliative Care**
 - In cases of urethral obstruction, a **urethral stent** or **cystostomy tube** may be placed to allow urination. Supportive care such as pain relief, dietary changes, and gastrointestinal support can also improve quality of life.

Monitoring and Prognosis

Regular blood and urine tests, imaging, and clinical assessments are essential to monitor disease progression and treatment effects.

- Median survival for dogs treated with **Piroxicam alone** is around **7 months**.
- Combination therapies may extend survival to **9–12 months**, although responses vary widely.

Our veterinary team will tailor your dog's treatment and follow-up based on their condition and your preferences.



If you notice signs of discomfort, straining, blood in the urine, or changes in behaviour, please contact us immediately!