



## How do I prepare for my first consultation with the oncologist?

A diagnosis of cancer in your pet is a very worrying time but the Oncology Team at Wear Referrals is here to help you through the process. The first consultation can seem intimidating, and owners can often feel overwhelmed with the amount of information and decision making that is required.

There are a few things that you can do to prepare for your first consultation which will help you to get the most out of it.

### **What's the most important thing I should do prior to the appointment?**

The first part of the consultation is about your pet's medical history. It is very easy once you arrive to forget everything that has happened with your pet, so it may help to write down the timeline of events. Keep notes of your pet's symptoms and their visits to the local vet. We will request your pet's history from your primary vet, but it is invaluable to get your version of events.

### **What should I bring?**

Please bring any medications that your pet is currently taking, ideally in the original packets. This also includes any supplements that you may be giving that have not been prescribed by your vet. If your pet is on a special diet then it may be a good idea to bring a small amount with you if your pet is going to stay for the day. You can always check with our Client Care Team prior to the appointment if we stock a particular diet.

Please do not bring any toys/items of clothing/bedding for your pet, as we cannot admit these items into the hospital.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, bring a friend. A second pair of ears can be really useful and they can also help you to remember questions you may have. Having a friend or family member with you will also provide much-needed emotional support.

### **What are the key questions?**

Each initial consultation is an hour long, and during that time the oncologist will discuss many aspects of your pet's diagnosis and treatment. We often will answer many of your questions during this conversation, but here are some that you may want to think about:

- What is my pet's diagnosis and how soon do we need to start treatment?
- What are the treatment options, what's involved, and how long will each treatment take?
- What are the benefits of the recommended treatment?
- What are its potential risks and side effects?
- What should I do if my pet develops new symptoms after they begin treatment?



### **Will I be told my pet's prognosis?**

Where possible, the oncologist will discuss your pet's prognosis with you. Sometimes we cannot give a very accurate estimate because we do not have all the information. Often further tests (e.g. scans or biopsies) are required, which the oncologist will discuss with you.

The oncologists will discuss prognosis in an open and honest way but please do not be disappointed if the numbers look discouraging. Remember that every cancer is as individual as the patient, and a lot of our survival times are based on averages. Cancer outcomes are improving all the time and our aim is to provide excellent quality of life for as long as possible.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Please have a look at the Oncology section of our website, which contains some information sheets and Frequently Asked Questions.