

DOG HEALTH: LUMPS & BUMPS

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED, AND WHEN TO QUIT SEARCHING SYMPTOMS



WHAT IS THIS LUMP?

LIPOMAS

When your dog gets a lump, your first thought should not be, “OH NO, CANCER.” Most lumps and bumps on dogs can be boiled down to one word: lipoma (pronounced like “lie-POH-ma). Lipomas are fatty cysts or tumors that form on your dog’s skin. If you just cringed at the word “tumor,” don’t worry. Not all tumors are malignant, and actually many are benign. A tumor is just an abnormal growth of cells, and in this case, fat cells. This kind of cyst is simply a growth of fat cells all in one place making a little bump. Lipomas feel like a moveable, fairly soft bumps underneath your dog’s skin. More often than not, they are subcutaneous (skin level), but occasionally they can be infiltrative (into muscle or deeper tissues). And though your mind can be at ease in the way of probability, you should always bring your dog to the vet to check and test any new lumps or bumps.

ALWAYS ASK YOUR VET

TESTING LUMPS & BUMPS

The two most important things you can do are pay attention to changes and keep up regular vet visits. Most lumps and bumps are found when just giving your dog some love or bringing her to a regular vet visit. Petting your dogs regularly is the best way to detect any abnormalities. If you notice any sudden changes in skin texture, color, lumps, or bumps, you should go directly to your vet. The easiest way to put your mind at ease and ensure your dog’s health is with a simple test at the vet.

FNA & BIOPSIES

FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION

The only way to be sure that a lump is benign is to check it out under a microscope. Most often your vet will perform a Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA). An FNA uses a small needle to take a sample of the tissue in the mass. That tissue is sent off to be tested to check.

BIOPSY

A biopsy is a quick out-patient procedure in which the vet surgically takes out a small sample of any questionable masses. This is only used if the FNA cannot be used based on the location or depth of the mass.

TYPES OF LUMPS & BUMPS

AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND ONE

TYPE OF LUMP OR BUMP	WHAT IS IT?	WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK I FOUND IT?
LIPOMAS (Common)	Benign fatty cyst just under the skin	Go to your vet and get it checked out
SEBACEOUS CYSTS (Common)	Benign bumps around hair follicles that often secrete oils	Go to your vet and get it checked out
SKIN TAGS (Common)	Benign growths of skin tissue in one place	Go to your vet and get it checked out
HISTIOCYSTOMAS (Common)	Benign red bumps that appear quickly that may go away or may be removed surgically	Go to your vet and get it checked out
CARCINOMA & MELANOMA (Rare)	Raw, dark, or misshapen patches on the skin; Malignant	Go to your vet and get it checked out
MAMMARY TUMORS (Rare)	On female dogs: a mass around the mammary gland; Malignant	Wait for it... GO TO YOUR VET AND GET IT CHECKED OUT

*Whenever you notice a change in your dog's appearance or skin, **don't panic!** Just talk to your vet!*