

## Medical Oncology

We are in the hospital Monday-Thursday 8:30 am – 6:30 pm, and generally see scheduled patients on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. There are two types of recheck/chemotherapy appointments offered by the medical oncology service: outpatient appointments and early admission appointments.

### Outpatient Appointments

For the outpatient appointments, families are asked to bring their patient at a specified time of day. Generally, families will wait while we collect specimens to be submitted to the lab and while the doctor performs the physical examination. While the lab specimens are being analyzed, the patient can either wait with the family in the lobby, or can wait with us if the family prefers to run errands or get lunch. Once it is determined that the patient is approved to receive treatment that day, we will treat the patient and prepare discharge instructions. This option is best for families who do not wish to leave their pet at the hospital for the whole day, and are able to take time out of their schedules to wait for labwork to be analyzed and for the treatment to be performed. There are only a limited amount of outpatient appointments offered each day.

### Day Case Appointments

Early admission (day case) appointments work differently than outpatient appointments. These appointments are scheduled for families that are not able to take time out of the middle of the day for the patient appointment OR if the outpatient appointments are full. Patients are brought in by their families early in the morning, generally before 9:00am (because we are a 24 hour facility, patients can be admitted at any time in the early morning). Lab samples are submitted and exams performed throughout the morning. Depending on the number of patients admitted to the oncology service that day, it is possible that a patient could arrive at 8 am and not receive their exam nor have their labwork submitted until noon or 1 pm. Patients are treated throughout the afternoon as labwork results become available and final treatment plans approved. While we do ask for a preferred pick up time on our early admission sheets, please keep the above in mind and realize that the earliest that patients are often ready to leave the hospital is 3 pm, and patients are often not ready to go until after 7 pm.

### Communication

Every time you bring your pet in you will be asked to give us information as to how your pet is feeling and if you have any specific questions or concerns. It is **very** important for families to leave accurate contact information when they leave their patient with us for any amount of time. If any problems arise during the day or we need to authorize additional testing, accurate contact information will allow us to get in touch with the family quickly in order to avoid extended delays in treatment. Additionally, we need a good way to give families time updates on their patients so that we can give them the most accurate

information about when their patient will be discharged. Furthermore, if more than one family member will be involved in the patient's care that day, we need detailed information on a) who to call for pickup time updates and b) who to call in the event of an emergency or to approve testing or treatments; if there is any chance the decision-making individual may not be available during the day, leaving a second contact person phone # is a good idea. Giving us all of this information can help to prevent confusion and communication delay between staff and family members.

### **Dr. Phillips' Callback Schedule**

When leaving messages, please be sure to provide day and evening telephone numbers as well as page and mobile phone numbers. The oncology service often returns non-urgent calls or reports labwork results late into the evening, so let us know if there is a time after which we should not call. Generally, though we may work later than 10 pm, we will not call you after 10 pm unless you specifically indicate that this is approved by your family.

### **After Hours and Weekend Emergencies**

If you have a question or concern when the medical oncology service is not scheduled, please call our hospital and ask to leave a message for the service if the question is non-urgent, or ask to speak to an emergency staff member if there is an immediate medical problem with your pet. We recommend against waiting for the oncology service to return before asking for help with a medical problem with your pet, because small problems can escalate into catastrophic ones over even 24 hours. Please bear in mind, the emergency staff members may be managing the care of a critical patient when you call and may need to call you back. If this occurs and you do not receive a call within the hour, please call in again. If you feel the problem is too urgent to wait for a return call, it is best that you bring your pet in to the emergency service.

When you speak with an emergency staff member, they may give some simple advice after consulting with the doctor, or may advise an emergency exam if the matter sounds serious to the doctor on duty. If you ever call after hours or on weekends, please keep a record of the names of staff members to whom you speak so we can discuss the care you and your pet received with the appropriate person that assisted you.

### **Morning Admissions for Day Cases**

If the medical oncology staff is on site, they will meet with you, collect your check-in forms, and escort your pet to a comfortable kennel. It is unlikely that they will be able to predict a discharge time for your pet until all patients are checked in for the day. If you are admitting your pet before the medical oncology staff arrives in the morning, then an overnight nursing technician or supervisor will perform these tasks and will notify our staff of the admission when they arrive. Please be aware that these overnight staff members are responsible for collecting paperwork and for the comfort of your pet, but will not be able to answer any procedural questions regarding the oncology-related care of your pet.

### **Evening Discharges**

If the medical oncology staff is on-site and immediately available, they will meet with you,

go over discharge notes if provided by Dr. Phillips, and answer any questions you have. If you have questions for Dr. Phillips, they will notify her and if she is available, she will meet with you before you leave. If she is unavailable, she will either call you that night or the next day to address those questions. If the medical oncology service staff is unavailable or has left for the evening, an evening nursing technician or supervisor will be responsible for the discharge procedure. While they will not be able to answer specific oncology questions, they are generally knowledgeable enough about medical recommendations to explain our discharge instructions. If there are questions they cannot answer, they will leave a message for us to call you the next day, or will contact Dr. Phillips at home if there is a question that cannot wait until morning.

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