

# COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

AT VETERINARY SPECIALISTS  
OF SOUTH FLORIDA



Wendy Brandt Photography



**Veterinary Specialists of South Florida**

24/7 EMERGENCY CRITICAL CARE SERVICES

Our goal is to provide your companion with compassionate, advanced diagnostics and treatment while focusing on their quality of life.

9410 Stirling Road Cooper City, FL 33024 • Telephone: (954) 437-9630 • Fax: (954) 437-7207

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# OUR PURPOSE AND MISSION

The Comprehensive Cancer Center is a component of Veterinary Specialists of South Florida.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center's oncology team focuses on hospital integration, uniting the surgical, emergency and critical care, advanced medical and diagnostic imaging services to provide state of the art technology for diagnosis, treatment, recovery and rehabilitation for our cancer patients. We collaborate with other companion animal facilities and organizations in cutting edge cancer research.

## SCHEDULING AN ONCOLOGY APPOINTMENT

Our oncology practice is based on a referral from your companion's primary veterinarian. You may request a referral from any veterinarian if your regular veterinarian is not available.

To schedule an appointment with our specialists call 954-437-9630. You will be scheduled for the first available appointment. Upon arrival you will be greeted by our friendly staff. Your Primary Veterinarian may refer you to a medical oncologist or a surgeon, depending on the nature of the problem. If you or your veterinarian feel your pet's condition is urgent, please make our receptionist aware of the situation.



Upon arrival the oncologist or oncologic surgeon will review any diagnostics provided by your veterinarian, perform a physical examination, review the history with you and with your input, determine the best treatment plan for your companion and family. If an emergency should arise outside of the oncology service's regular hours we are staffed with emergency doctors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

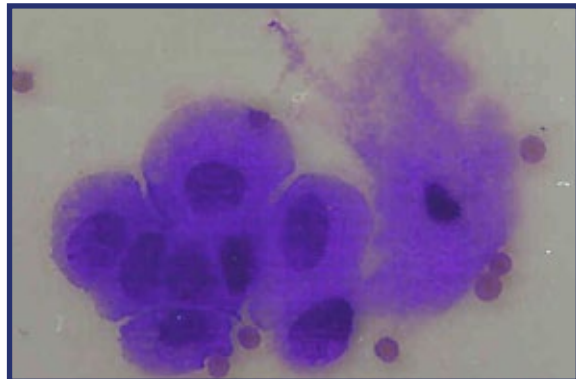
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## HOW IS CANCER DIAGNOSED?

The first most important task is to determine if your companion has cancer and if so, what type. Your veterinarian may have already performed this step. Each different cancer type has an expected behavior, some will be locally invasive and others have the potential to spread (metastasize). The next step is to determine to what extent, if at all, the cancer is affecting the body.

We have acquired a number of state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment including an in-house complete blood analyzer and are able to evaluate organ function parameters. Urinalysis and cytology of blood (hematology) and masses (cytology accessed by fine needle aspirate) may be performed by our doctors.



We utilize digital radiography (x-rays) to help us determine the size and shape of each organ, while ultrasound helps us to view organ texture. Our fluoroscopy unit acts as an “in-motion radiograph” and is used to detect functional abnormalities and obtain tissue samples when necessary. Our computed tomography scanner (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) help us to see a more detailed view of organs, bone and tissues unable to be visualized by radiographs.

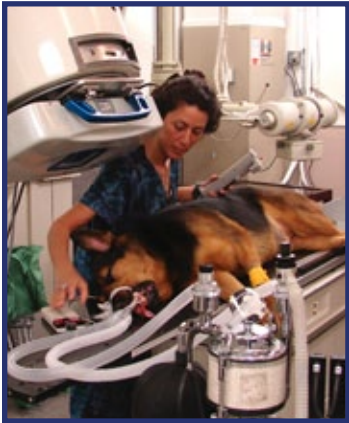
## HOW IS CANCER TREATED?

This answer is patient specific and is dependent on the tumor type. Once the tumor type is identified, the expected tumor behavior will dictate the recommended treatment. If the identified cancer is expected to act locally then surgery or radiation therapy may be recommended. On the other hand, if the cancer is expected to metastasize or is affecting the whole body then chemotherapy may be recommended. Novel treatments may also be recommended.

We have several forms of radiation therapy and are among the few veterinary institutions in the world equipped with Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT). This is a form of radiation therapy that permits treatment from a complete circle (360°), with treatment delivered through various ports from a continuously moving window, permitting a multitude of shapes and sizes. This capability allows us to better target the tumor tissue and avoid as much normal tissue as possible, thereby decreasing the risk of side effects.



## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF CANCER TREATMENTS?



Generally, chemotherapy is not as debilitating as experienced by human patients. In veterinary oncology we do not use the high doses and frequency of treatment utilized in people. Our goal is a great quality of life for the entire family. The average pet will show only minimal side effects from chemotherapy. The most common being an occasional lack of appetite. If a lack of appetite occurs it may be encountered the day of treatment but more commonly 3-5 days after a chemotherapy treatment. All chemotherapy patients are sent home with anti-nausea and anti-diarrhea medications as a precautionary measure. In rare cases, if side effects persist, we will alter our treatment regime. Some dogs will lose fur but most breeds will not. While cats do not experience fur loss their coats become blunted and more plush. Cats also may have whisker loss during treatments but maneuvering about will not be problematic. Overall, a lack of appetite for one meal, one vomit or diarrhea episode is all we deem acceptable before medical intervention is recommended.

Radiation therapy side effects are a mild skin irritation in the treatment field and possible permanent loss of fur or coat color change at the treatment site. Side effects are dictated by the region the radiation treatment encompasses. Nausea, diarrhea and lethargy are very rare side effects with radiation therapy.

## OUR ONCOLOGY SPECIALISTS



**Ronald L. Burk, DVM, MS**  
Diplomate American College of Veterinary Radiology  
Radiology and Radiation Oncology

Chief of Staff: Dr. Burk graduated from Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine, interned at the Henry Bergh Memorial Hospital of the ASPCA and completed his radiology residency at the University of Missouri. His career brought him to The Animal Medical Center in New York as Assistant Chief of Staff and Radiologist. He was a faculty member at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, developed the radiation therapy program at the Animal Medical Center, and was board certified in the first certification exam in 1994. Dr. Burk developed the first radiation therapy program in Florida.



**Lisa DiBernardi, DVM**  
Diplomate American College of Internal Medicine (Oncology),  
Diplomate American College of Radiology (Radiation Oncology)

Dr. DiBernardi graduated from Louisiana State University, her internship followed at our very own Veterinary Specialists of South Florida. She went on to complete a residency in medical oncology at Purdue University and a second residency in radiation oncology at Louisiana State University. Dr. DiBernardi left a specialty center in San Antonio, Texas and joined VSSF in September of 2006.

# SURGICAL ONCOLOGY TEAM

Our surgical oncology team is composed of four experienced and aggressive surgeons who offer a broad variety of expertise including limb-sparing, complex reconstructive surgery, brain and spinal surgery and the best abdominal and thoracic (chest) surgical procedures. Many of these procedures may be able to be performed in a minimally invasive fashion. The collaborative approach to patient assessment, treatment and care is unsurpassed.



**Michael G. Aronsohn, V.M.D.**  
Diplomate, A.C.V.S.

Dr. Aronsohn received his VMD and completed his surgical residency at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a staff surgeon and later the Director of Surgery at Angell Memorial Animal Hospital, in Boston Massachusetts and a Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Aronsohn is a general soft tissue and orthopedic surgeon with a special interest in oncologic surgery. He has authored several scientific articles and textbook chapters.



**David Spranklin, D.V.M.**  
Diplomate, A.C.V.S.

Dr. Spranklin is a fifth generation veterinarian. He received his D.V.M. from Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and completed his internship at Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Spranklin completed his surgical residency at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. Dr. Spranklin performs soft tissue, orthopedic and oncologic surgery with a special interest in minimally invasive surgery (laparoscopy, thoracoscopy, and arthroscopy). He is a board certified member of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS) as well as a member of the AVMA and BCVMA. Dr. Spranklin works to provide the newest techniques and procedures in veterinary surgery to offer our patients both state-of-the-art and personalized care.



**Michelle Carnes, D.V.M., MS, DACVIM**  
(Neurology)

Dr. Carnes received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Auburn University in 2004. She then went on to complete a rotating internship at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In 2005, Dr. Carnes returned to Auburn University to complete a 3-year residency in neurology/neurosurgery. At that time she also earned a Masters degree in Biomedical Science with a research focus on novel drug therapy for seizure management in cats. Her professional interests include craniotomies (brain surgery for tumor removal and Chiari-like malformation/syringomyelia) and spinal surgery.



**James R. Cook, D.V.M., PhD, DACVIM**  
(Neurology)

Dr. Cook received his DVM from Ohio State University in 1977; served his internship at the Veterinary Hospital for Special Services in Mt. Kisco, New York and completed his PhD and residency at the University of Georgia. Dr. Cook taught neurology and general internal medicine at both the University of Georgia and Purdue University for 11 years. Dr. Cook's practice is limited to neurology and neurosurgery.

# NEUROSURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF CANCER

Certain tumors of the nervous system may benefit from surgical intervention. An advanced neurosurgical instrument known as CUSA (for cavitron ultrasonic aspirator) which maximizes tumor removal while sparing normal nervous tissue and reducing hemorrhage is available at our hospital. In some cases (for example, brain meningiomas in cats) surgery may be curative. In others, surgery may not be curative but may be necessary to reduce the volume of tumor present to allow radiation and/or chemotherapy to achieve its maximum benefit. Some tumors will not benefit at all from surgical treatment. Whether to include surgery in the treatment of a nervous system tumor is a consensus decision by the oncology and neurosurgery staff members after a group evaluation of all available data including advanced imaging results.



## OUR NURSING STAFF



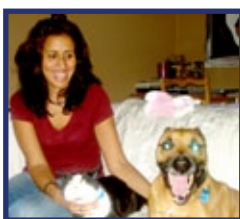
**Lisa B. Estrin, BS, LVT, CVT, VTS (Oncology)**  
Diagnostic Imaging and Radiation Supervisor

Lisa is a licensed and certified veterinary technologist and completed extensive radiation and diagnostic imaging training at the Animal Medical Center in New York. Her experience with cancer patients extends past twenty years. She is one of the founders and the Director at Large of the Oncology Division of the Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians.



**Tom J. Warren**  
ICU Supervisor, Oncology Nurse

Tom has relocated from Los Angeles CA where he supervised for a prominent oncology referral practice. Tom's veterinary nursing experience has spanned twenty years. He is compassionate, caring and knowledgeable in cancer medicine and critical care. He is more than willing to help or answer any questions you may have regarding cancer and its treatments.



**Vanessa Romero, A.S., LVT**  
Oncology Nurse

Vanessa has relocated from New York where she obtained an A.A.S. in Veterinary Technology in 2003. She is a L.V.T. (Licensed Veterinary Technician) and has been practicing for six years.

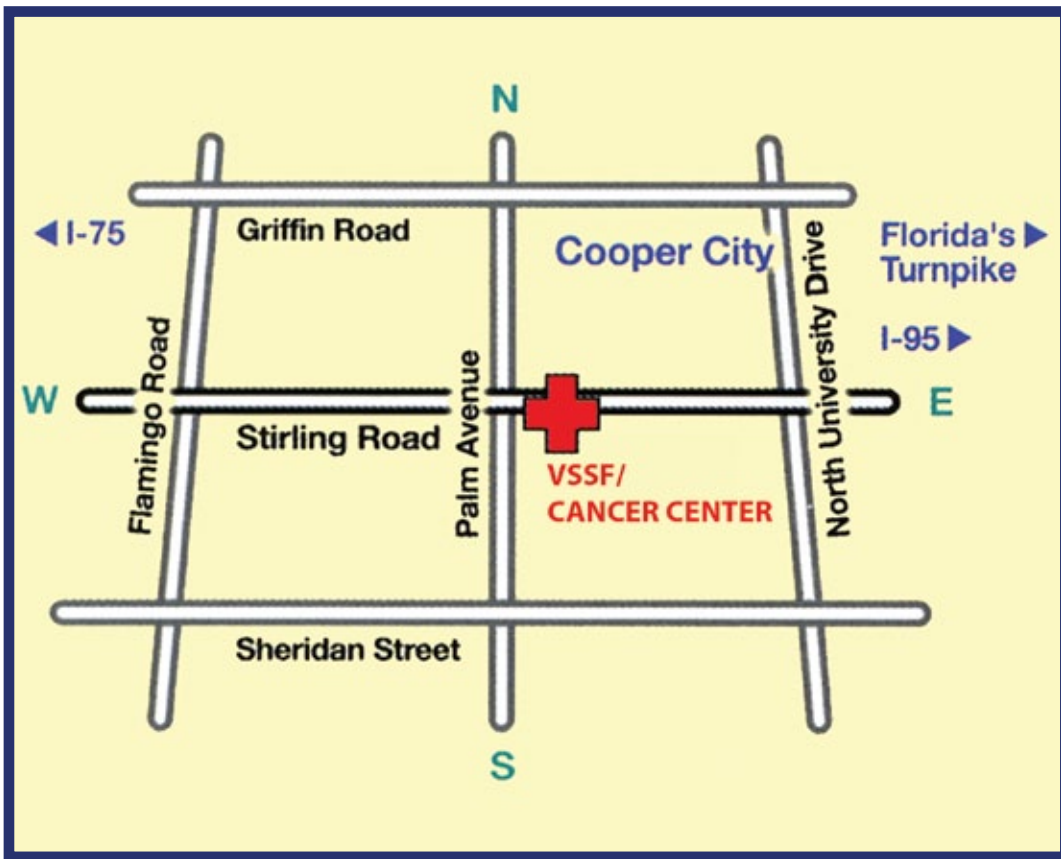


## OUR SURGICAL TECHNICIANS

**Left to right:** Kellie Swanson, Suzanne Ratti, Jessica Gonzalez, Dave Allison (**Supervisor**), Tom Gowing, Amy Krohn, Raymond Paige, and Michelle Midthun



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