

CHEMOTHERAPY

PET CARE SHEET

Chemotherapy drugs are cytotoxic, which means they kill cells, they are used to selectively kill cancer cells.

Many animals experience no side effects from chemotherapy because the doses used are much lower than those used in human medicine but some animals experience vomiting and diarrhoea which is usually temporary. Hair loss is rare. Sometimes an animal's immune system is suppressed and the protective white cells are diminished leaving the animal at the risk of infection. For that reason we monitor blood cell counts and may need to temporarily suspend chemotherapy if the white cell count is too low.

Because chemotherapy drugs can be absorbed through the skin and are passed out in the urine, faeces and saliva it is essential to take precautions when medicating and dealing with your animal's waste. Always wear gloves, double bag any faeces or urine, line cat litter trays and promptly empty. Wash food and water bowls if possible in a separate washing up bowl. Do not allow your pet to lick you

Pregnant women, children and those on immune suppressive drugs themselves should not be involved in chemotherapy of their pet.