

## Epitheliotropic Lymphoma

**Also Known As:** Mycosis Fungoides (MF), Cutaneous Lymphoma

**Transmission or Cause:** Epitheliotropic lymphoma is a malignant cancer arising from T lymphocytes. There is some evidence that epitheliotropic lymphoma in cats may be linked to FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus) infection.

**Affected Animals:** Epitheliotropic Lymphoma usually affects older dogs and cats (average age is 9-11 years). There is no sex or breed predilection.

**Clinical signs:** In dogs, this disease usually presents in four main ways:

- Generalized red inflamed and scaly skin. The skin may become so flaky that the flakes appear to shed in large sheets.
- Loss of pigment and/or ulceration and crusting of the nose, lips and around the eyes. Owners may notice a black nose slowly lose color to eventually become completely de-pigmented.
- Single or multiple skin nodules.
- Thickening and/or ulceration of oral tissues.

Cats may have red nodules or single areas of red raised skin especially around the head and neck. Many animals will have enlarged lymph nodes and many times will be generally ill.

**Diagnosis:** The definitive diagnosis of epitheliotropic lymphoma is made by taking a skin biopsy which involves removing small pieces of skin after numbing the area and submitting the skin samples to a pathologist for review.

**Prognosis:** The prognosis for epitheliotropic lymphoma is grave. The average survival time from when lesions are first noted to death or euthanasia is about 5-10 months, although some animals may live years after diagnosis if the disease is progressing slowly.

**Treatment:** Treatment of epitheliotropic lymphoma involves surgery and/or radiation therapy if only a single lesion is present. Multiple or widespread lesions are very difficult to treat but therapy with various chemotherapy drugs may be attempted. Topical chemotherapeutic drugs may also be helpful in single lesions or in animals with several lesions. Supportive treatment for the animal is available for comfort as the disease progresses.

**Prevention:** There is no known way to prevent epitheliotropic lymphoma.