



Lump & Bump: When to Check, How to Measure

PETSLIKEMINE
CANCER & TUMOURS

Most lumps aren't cancer, but only a sample tells. How to measure one and when to get it checked

PET NAME _____	VET PRACTICE _____	LUMP FIRST NOTICED (DATE) _____
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You've found a lump, and your stomach has dropped. First, breathe: lumps are very common, especially in older pets, and most skin lumps turn out to be benign. But here is the one thing this card is firm about, because it is the thing that matters. You cannot tell whether a lump is harmless by looking at it or feeling it, and neither can your vet. The only way to know what a lump *is*, is to have it sampled. So the right move is not to panic, and not to "watch and wait" either: it is to measure it, log it, and get it checked.

THE "SEE SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING" RULE

Veterinary cancer specialists use a simple threshold for when a lump should be sampled rather than watched. Get a lump checked, and ask about a needle sample (an aspirate), if any of these is true:

- It's bigger than about a pea (roughly 1cm across)
- It's been there a month or more
- It's growing, or changing in size, shape or feel
- It's bothering your pet, or your pet seems unwell

WHY "WATCH AND WAIT" IS THE WRONG INSTINCT

The only way to know what a lump is, is to look at its cells, usually with a quick needle sample. Feeling it tells you almost nothing: soft, hard, moveable or fixed, none of it reliably separates a harmless lump from a cancerous one. And the longer a worrying lump is left, the bigger it gets and the harder it is to remove cleanly, so finding out early is the powerful thing. A sample tells you what it is; your fingers do not.

HOW TO MEASURE AND RECORD A LUMP

- Note exactly where it is on the body (which side, and where)
- Measure across the widest point: a ruler in mm, or compare to a pea, grape or coin
- Note what it feels like: soft or firm, moveable or fixed, and is it sore
- Take a clear photo with something next to it for scale, and write the date
- Log it in the free Lump & Bump Tracker so you and your vet can see any change

REASSURING VS WORTH GETTING CHECKED SOONER

OFTEN (BUT NOT ALWAYS) LESS WORRYING

- Soft, and the same size for a long time
- A known, previously-sampled fatty lump
- Not growing, not bothering your pet

Still measure and log it: appearance is never proof.

GET CHECKED SOONER

- Fast-growing, ulcerated, bleeding, hot or painful
- One that comes and goes or changes size (a mast cell trait)
- A swelling in the mouth, or your pet is off-colour

A lump that shrinks then swells is not reassurance.

MEASUREMENT LOG

DATE	WHERE ON THE BODY	SIZE (MM / VS A PEA)	HOW IT FEELS / CHANGED?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

How to use. Measure it, photograph it, log it, and get it sampled rather than watched. Only your vet, usually with a needle sample, can tell what a lump is. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

**ONLY A SAMPLE TELLS WHAT A LUMP IS:
DON'T WATCH AND WAIT**
