

Lumps and Bumps: Should I Worry?

Family Matters

One of the most common reasons pet guardians book an appointment is because they've found **a lump**.

It might have appeared overnight.

It might have been there for months.

It might not seem to bother your pet at all.

The first question is almost always:

"Is it cancer?"

The honest answer is that **nobody can tell simply by looking or feeling a lump**.

At Amity, we believe that every lump deserves to be taken seriously—but not every lump is something to fear. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you understand how we investigate lumps and why early diagnosis matters.

Not All Lumps Are Cancer

The good news is that many lumps are completely benign.

Some are simply fatty lumps (lipomas).

Others may be cysts, warts, abscesses or harmless skin growths.

Unfortunately, some lumps are cancerous.

The challenge is that **many benign and malignant lumps look and feel remarkably similar**.

That's why appearance alone isn't enough.

Bigger Doesn't Mean More Dangerous

Many people assume that a small lump can wait, while a large lump must be serious.

In reality, the opposite is sometimes true.

Some aggressive tumours begin as tiny lumps.

Some large lumps have been harmless for years.

The size tells us very little.

The diagnosis tells us everything.

How Do We Find Out?

The first step is usually a **fine needle aspirate (FNA)**.

Using a very small needle—similar to the one used for a vaccination—we collect a sample of cells from the lump.

Most pets tolerate this procedure extremely well and **it usually doesn't require sedation or a general anaesthetic**.

The collected cells are examined under the microscope, giving us valuable information about what type of lump we're dealing with and helping us decide what to do next.

Occasionally, the sample is **non-diagnostic**, meaning there aren't enough cells to identify the lump. This often happens because the mass is particularly firm or adhesive, making it difficult to collect cells. While this may seem frustrating, it isn't a pointless result. Only certain types of masses behave this way, so even a non-diagnostic FNA provides valuable clinical information and helps guide our next steps.

Why Not Just Remove Every Lump?

Knowing what the lump is helps us plan the **right surgery**.

There are generally two approaches to removing a mass: a **narrow-margin excision** or a **wide-margin excision**.

If a tumour is locally invasive, removing it with narrow margins may leave microscopic tumour cells behind, greatly increasing the risk of it growing back.

On the other hand, if a lump is benign, performing a wide-margin surgery may mean a larger wound, a longer anaesthetic, increased cost, more discomfort and a longer healing period—all for a mass that never needed such extensive surgery.

By identifying the type of lump first, we can choose the operation that gives your pet the best outcome while avoiding unnecessary treatment.

Sometimes additional tests, such as a biopsy, are recommended if we still need more information.

Don't Wait for It to Change

One of the biggest mistakes we see is waiting until a lump becomes larger, ulcerates or starts causing problems.

The earlier a lump is investigated, the more treatment options we usually have.

Even if a lump proves to be harmless, you'll have peace of mind.

And if it isn't, early diagnosis often gives us the best chance of successful treatment.

Knowledge Replaces Worry

Finding a lump can be frightening.

But worrying about it at home rarely provides answers.

At Amity, we'll examine your pet, explain what we think, discuss the most appropriate next step and help you make an informed decision.

Because the goal isn't simply to remove lumps.

It's to understand them, so we can choose the right treatment—not too little, and not more than is necessary.

At Amity, **Amity Essential Membership includes unlimited health checks**, making it easy to have new lumps examined as soon as you notice them.

The sooner we know what we're dealing with, the sooner we can make the right plan.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.