

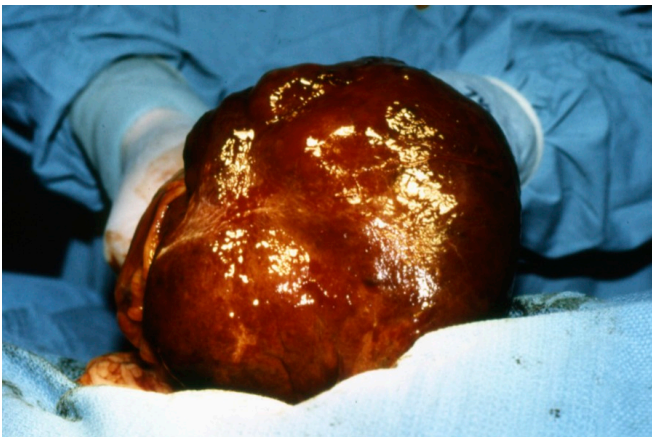
# Liver Lobectomy

Tumors found in the liver can either be primary or metastatic. Primary liver tumors are those that originated within the liver. Metastatic liver tumors are those where the original tumor occurred in another organ that has then spread to the liver. Primary tumors in the liver are uncommon while metastatic tumors are more prevalent. Most primary liver tumors carry a better prognosis compared to metastatic tumors.

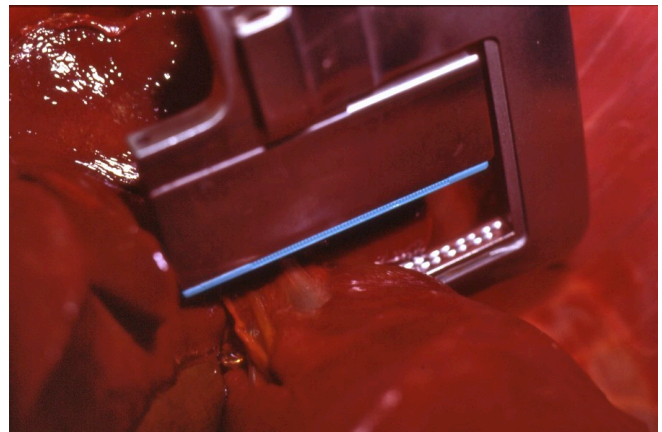
Of the primary liver tumors, hepatocellular carcinoma is the most common. Hepatocellular carcinoma has three subtypes: massive, diffuse, and nodular. Only the massive subtype is amicable to surgery because they are confined to a single liver lobe while the others involve multiple lobes of the liver. Your pet may undergo an abdominal ultrasound to provide helpful information about the tumor to aid in the decision for surgical removal.

Surgical excision of a liver tumor requires an exploratory laparotomy (celiotomy). Generally, left sided masses are easier to remove because there is better access to the left aspect of the liver. This procedure requires meticulous attention to anatomy and surgical technique and is best performed by a Board Certified Surgeon. The right side of the liver lies very close to the vena cava which can become involved in the tumor, therefore, hemorrhage (bleeding) can be excessive and sometimes fatal with removal of right sided liver tumors. Some right sided liver tumors can not be removed.

The most current data supports a very good prognosis (>1400 days) following removal of massive hepatocellular carcinomas. This data is encouraging and it should prompt clinicians to consider referral for an exploratory laparotomy for dogs with primary liver tumors.



Liver tumor at surgery



Surgical stapler used to remove a liver lobe.