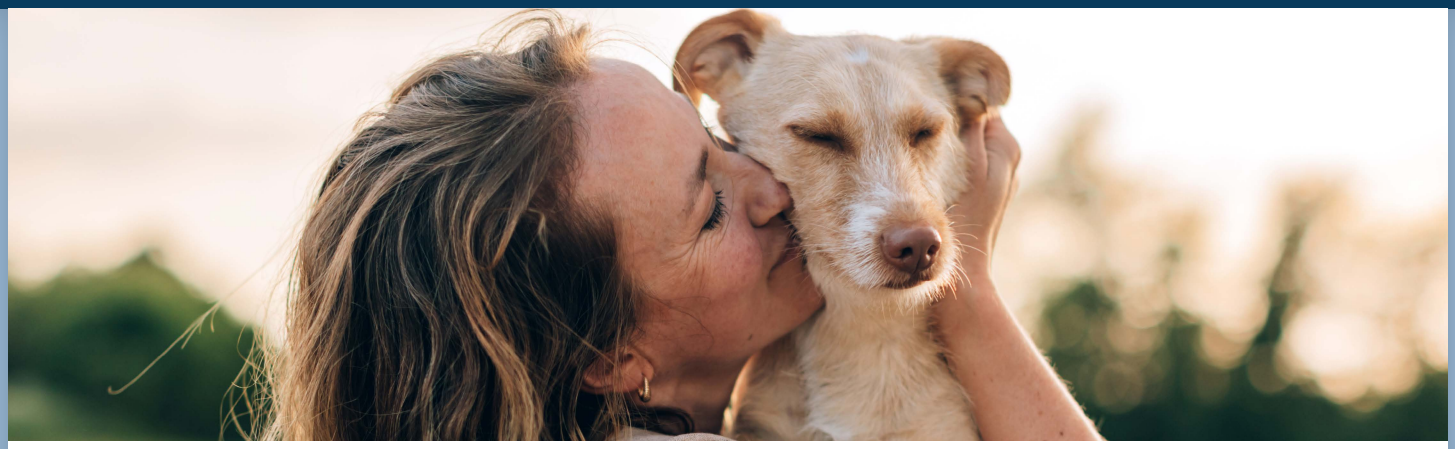
IS RADIATION THERAPY RIGHT FOR MY PET?

VIRGINIA VETERINARY CENTERS

BUSH VETERINARY NEUROLOGY SERVICE



Overview

Radiation therapy is a medical treatment that utilizes high-energy radiation to control, cure, or alleviate symptoms of certain cancers and severe inflammatory conditions in pets. Virginia Veterinary Centers is among the select facilities in the region offering this advanced treatment option for companion animals. This document offers an overview of radiation therapy for pets. However, it should not replace direct consultation with your pet's veterinary team.

Treatment Planning and Delivery

Before initiating radiation therapy, a thorough planning process is essential:

- **Consultation:** A veterinary oncologist will assess your pet's condition, review diagnostic tests, and discuss treatment options.
- **Imaging:** Advanced imaging techniques like CT or MRI scans are used to determine the exact location and size of the tumor.
- **Simulation:** Your pet is positioned in the exact way they will be during treatment, and immobilization devices may be created to ensure consistency.
- **Treatment Plan:** A customized plan is developed to deliver the appropriate radiation dose while sparing healthy tissues.
- **Treatment Sessions:** Depending on the protocol, your pet may receive radiation daily (Monday through Friday) over several weeks. Each session typically lasts 30-60 minutes, and anesthesia is used to keep your pet still during the procedure.

Cost Considerations

Radiation therapy requires specialized equipment and a skilled team, which makes it a costly treatment. The total cost depends on the tumor type and complexity of the treatment plan.

Goals of Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy can serve different purposes:

- Curative Intent: Aims to eliminate the tumor entirely, often used when the cancer is localized.
- Palliative Care: Focuses on relieving symptoms and improving quality of life, especially in advanced cancer stages.
- Adjuvant Therapy: Used in conjunction with surgery or chemotherapy to enhance overall treatment effectiveness.