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"Jack" - Flat Coated Retriever with Cancer



Limb amputation is a very emotive topic. Most clients reel in horror at the prospect of their pet being "mutilated" in this manner. It is also the case that the larger the patient the more dramatic and potentially damaging the effect has with only three limbs remaining.

All this brings me to "Jack" a very much larger than life Flat Coated Retriever who presented to me very recently with a right forelimb lameness. Despite the fact that I see many lame patients on a daily basis it became clear all too quickly that "Jack's" problem was anything but straightforward.

Failure to respond to routine anti-inflammatories and the presence of a soft tissue mass directed us, after cytopathology of a fine needle biopsy, to a diagnosis of aggressive soft tissue cancer. A disease which sadly Flat Coated Retrievers lead the league table as the most affected dog breed.

The options thereafter are very stark. Attempt to control the patient's pain with medication whilst accepting that the cancer will progress or attempt to surgically remove the cancer along with the affected limb. "Jack's" owner did not make the decision lightly but after careful consideration elected for the radical surgery.

Ensuring, as far as possible, that the cancer had not already spread through survey radiography "Jack's" right front leg including the shoulder was removed. The key to his current success and recovery, apart from having the right owner, is without doubt his endless enthusiasm and zest for life. Whilst it remains to be seen how long his energy will last I am in no doubt that his owner made the right choice and sincerely hope that "Jack" graces us with his boundless energy for a long time to come.



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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care