

Christine E. Hunt, DVM



Dr. Christine E. Hunt received her B.S. in Zoology from N.C. State University, cum laude, followed by her veterinary doctorate from Oklahoma State University. She has practiced small animal medicine, dentistry and surgery in Greensboro for 27 years. In 2003, she opened University Animal Hospital. Her interests lie in geriatric medicine, pain management and advanced dentistry.

What are some of the newest techniques for managing degenerative joint diseases such as osteoarthritis, immune mediated joint disease, damaged cartilage and muscle, tendon or ligament injury?

The FDA has approved the use of adult stem cells harvested from an injured animal's own adipose (fat) tissue to repair and regenerate damaged joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and bones. This new cutting edge technology is commonly called *regenerative medicine* because the stem and other bioactive cells can differentiate into many different types of tissue. Once activated and introduced into the affected joint or tissue, the healing begins. Within two to four weeks, over 85% of animals receiving stem cell therapy show dramatic clinical improvement, decreased pain, increased range of motion and have either discontinued or decreased pain medication.

PRP or Platelet Rich Plasma is a natural derivative concentrated from a pet's own platelets. Platelets are necessary for wound healing because they provide hemostasis, inflammatory modulators and a variety of growth factors—all necessary components for tissue synthesis and repair. By injecting PRP into acutely injured joints or tissues, we can speed your pet's recovery rate. This procedure is safe, drug and chemical free and can be quickly performed with light sedation in one visit. PRP can also be used as a temporary measure for chronic arthritis patients who may not qualify for stem cell treatment.

Where can my pet receive this type of treatment?

University Animal Hospital of Greensboro currently offers both adipose derived stem cell and PRP therapy for dogs and cats. The stem cells and PRP are harvested and activated using our in-house state of the art equipment and the patients receive same day treatment.

Can any animal receive stem cell therapy?

Animals with active cancer or an active infection should not receive stem cell therapy. Before an animal is scheduled for treatment, a pre-anesthetic diagnostic workup of survey radiographs, blood count, blood chemistry profile, urinalysis, thyroid and a tick screen should be completed. Any animal with a pre-existing infection or positive tick screen should receive appropriate antibiotics prior to the procedure. Animals with malignant tumors would not qualify for stem cell therapy. Animals with other neuromuscular diseases may not benefit from stem cell therapy.

How is the stem cell procedure done?

The qualified patient is anesthetized and 20 grams of fat will be surgically removed from either the shoulder fat or from the falciform fat just below the navel. The tissue is processed to concentrate and activate the stem cells. The patient is lightly sedated for the intra-articular injections. Patients also receive IV stem cells, which help with other areas of inflammation in the body. We have anecdotal reports nationwide that animals with other concurrent inflammatory diseases such as chronic bowel disease, feline stomatitis, allergic dermatitis, asthma and liver disease have shown dramatic improvement.

We are currently treating a young Pomeranian for hip dysplasia and a partial ACL tear who also has Alopecia X, a hereditary skin disorder characterized by severe hair loss. In addition to resuming his goat herding job (yes, he is a farm dog who has not realized he is only eight pounds), he has also begun to regrow his fur. There is currently no known effective treatment for Alopecia X.

How much does stem cell therapy cost?

The cost of stem cell therapy is directly proportional to the size of the animal, the number of sites injected and whether or not cells will be cryo-banked for future use. The cost ranges from \$1800 to \$3000. Cryobank storage is \$150 per year. PRP therapy is also dependent on patient size and number of sites injected, with costs ranging from \$800 to \$1250.

What is the recuperation time?

As with any surgical procedure, the recovery period is approximately 10 days. Patients also experience pain and discomfort for about 36 hours after the joint injections. During this time, they should receive regular analgesics and NSAIDS. After that, they begin to show very rapid improvement with most animals almost completely pain free by the time their sutures are removed.

We would like to encourage anyone to call for more information or visit our website.

University Animal Hospital of Greensboro, LLC

A FULL-SERVICE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

- Geriatric & Internal Medicine • Dental • Surgery • Chiropractic Care
- Pain Management • Therapeutic Shockwave • Puppy Training
- House Calls • Regenerative Adult Stem Cell Therapy
- Master Groomer • Boarding • Specialty Diets

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