

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: STEREOTACTIC RADIATION THERAPY

## What is Stereotactic Radiation Therapy (SRT)?

Stereotactic Radiation Therapy (SRT), also known as "Stereotactic Radiosurgery, Cyberknife, or Gammaknife," is an advanced type of radiation therapy delivery that uses a variety of specialized technology to precisely deliver a very high dose of radiation to a tumor, while simultaneously protecting and sparing the normal surrounding tissues.



## Is my pet a good candidate for SRT?

While many different tumor types in various locations throughout the body can be treated with SRT, not every pet is a candidate for this procedure. This therapy requires a "gross" or "bulky" tumor that will serve as a "sink" for the high doses of radiation therapy to be delivered. Therefore, pets who have had surgery to remove their tumors are not candidates for SRT (though they would qualify for other types of radiation treatments). In addition, some normal organs are more sensitive to radiation therapy than others, so the site and overall extent of the tumor within the body is also an important consideration for SRT candidacy.

## How do SRT treatments work?

- First, a consultation with a Radiation Oncologist will determine if your pet is a good candidate for SRT, and will also allow you to discuss the specific ins and outs for your pet's treatment.
- Next, a CT scan is performed to: 1) determine the internal extent of the tumor; and 2) allow for special software to define the tumor and normal tissues, which will further enhance the delivery of the treatment. This CT scan is typically performed at the hospital that will be doing the SRT. This allows use equipment made specifically for your pet to increase the precision and safety of their treatments.
- Finally, the treatment protocols vary from patient to patient, but typically consist of 1-4 treatment sessions delivered either daily or every other day (such as Monday, Wednesday, Friday). The protocol is chosen by the Radiation Oncologist to be as effective against the tumor as possible, while still protecting normal tissues.

## Are there side effects from SRT treatments?

While we are able to sculpt the dose very precisely away from normal tissues, we can still see some side effects from the treatments. These side effects are generally very mild (especially compared to conventional radiation protocols) and will go away on their own several weeks after they begin. The Radiation Oncology team will discuss possible side effects and treatments for your pet with you during the initial consultation. We typically manage these side effects with anti-inflammatory and pain medications as needed—some patients do not require treatment for them at all. The specific side effects will depend on the type of tumor, its location within the body, and the treatment protocol.

For more information about stereotactic radiation therapy or cancer treatment for your dog or cat in general, MedVet is a resource available to you & your family veterinarian. To learn more, visit [medvet.com](http://medvet.com).