

How Tumors And Cancer Affect Rats

Learn about the different tumors and types of cancer rats may develop.

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Tumors are common in rats. Mammary tumors are most often seen, and can show up anywhere from the neck to the groin region, and appear in both male and female rats. Most of these tumors are benign and easily removed. A small portion of these tumors are cancerous. Spayed female rats are less likely to develop these tumors than intact females.

Pituitary tumors, which are always fatal, are more common in unspayed female rats. Signs of these tumors include loss of use of the front legs, walking aimlessly in circles, running into objects or hyperactivity. Eventually, a rat has trouble eating. These tumors can be treated with antibiotics and steroids to prolong the rat's life for a few weeks or months after signs begin to show.

Fibromas are another fairly common type of tumor in rats. These usually occur on the side of the rat's body and are easily removed. These tumors are usually, but not always benign.

Rats can also develop tumors of the brain and bone cancer of the jaw. They are also prone to skin cancers. These appear as sores that won't quickly heal on the face, under the ear or anywhere on body.

Tumors are typically firm in texture, but only a veterinarian can diagnose a tumor.

If you suspect your rat has a tumor, don't wait to take your small pet to the vet. Early intervention is key to your rat's health.