



Veterinary Cancer Specialists of New England

Veterinary Electrochemotherapy (ECT)

What Is ECT?

- Combines low-dose chemotherapy with safe electrical pulses
- Electrical pulses open tumor cell walls → medicine enters more effectively
- Targets cancer cells directly while sparing healthy tissue, providing local disease control

When Is It Recommended?

- Tumors in skin or just under the skin
 - Sarcomas, carcinomas, melanomas, mast cell tumor scars. Excellent alternative to radiation for additional local disease control/ incomplete resections.
 - Tumors in sensitive areas (face, mouth, near eyes, etc.)
 - After surgery to reduce regrowth risk
 - For tumors that can't be fully removed surgically

Benefits

- Minimally invasive – short procedure, little damage to healthy tissue
- Strong local tumor control
- Very few side effects and lower expense when compared to radiation therapy
- Can be repeated if needed
- Helps maintain appearance and function in delicate areas

The Procedure

- Performed under light anesthesia or heavy sedation
- Chemotherapy injected systemically or into the tumor in some cases.
- Electrical pulses applied through small probes
- Outpatient: pets go home the same day

Recovery & Results

- Mild swelling, redness, or scabbing may occur
- Usually resolves within 1–2 weeks
- Tumors often shrink within days to weeks
- More than one session may be needed

Risks

- Local swelling, redness, or delayed wound healing
- Rare discomfort at treatment site
- Very low risk of whole-body chemo side effects
- Tumor recurrence still possible — monitoring is essential

Home Care

- Keep area clean and dry
- Prevent licking or scratching (collar if needed)
- Give medications exactly as prescribed
- Attend follow-up visits to track healing and tumor response