

Suffield Veterinary Hospital July 2022 Patient of the Month

Meet Mitzi, a tiny 15-year-old poodle mix owned by our Practice Manager. She was already a senior dog when Liz adopted her after a coworker's elderly grandmother died and Mitzi needed a new home. Mitzi now lives in a busy household with three other dogs, a rabbit, a parrot, fish, and three kids. Amazingly this little fluff ball adapted beautifully to the chaos. She follows Liz everywhere and loves "sharing" food with the children.

A few weeks ago Mitzi started tilting her head slightly to one side and became a little wobbly. This then advanced to a more severe head tilt, twitching eyes, inability to stand and nausea. Our veterinarians diagnosed Mitzi with old dog vestibular disease.

Canine idiopathic vestibular disease (also called old dog vestibular disease) and its feline counterpart, feline idiopathic vestibular disease, begin acutely and resolve acutely. Usually improvement is evident in 72 hours and the animal is normal in 7 to 14 days, although occasionally a head tilt will persist. When a case of vestibular disease begins, it may be a good idea to wait a few days to see if improvement occurs before doing diagnostics beyond a routine blood/urine database. These two conditions are idiopathic, meaning we do not know why they occur. We do know that they represent problems in the nerves of the middle ear rather than in the brain. Treatment of idiopathic vestibular disease generally involves TLC and control of nausea (motions sickness) while the condition runs its course.

Mitzie was treated with fluids, hand feeding, anti-nausea medicine and lots of helping her walk and get comfortable. After a week she began eating better and could walk with help. After two weeks she still had a head tilt but could walk well, even up and down stairs. Her appetite is back to normal. She looks perkier and is getting back to her normal spunky self.

Mitzie was selected as our patient of the month to educate about vestibular disease, and to demonstrate how wonderfully adaptable dogs, even senior dogs, can be to changes in their lifestyle. We are pleased to name Mitzi the Suffield Veterinary Hospital July 2022 Patient of the Month.



Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

Dr. Daniel Rothbart ❖ Dr. Emilie Laston

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View all of our Patients of the Month on our web site, www.suffieldvet.com