

Suffield Veterinary Hospital November 2024 Patient of the Month

Meet Rocket, a sweet four-year-old Labrador retriever mix dog, loved by Andrew Twarog and his family of Enfield. Rocket was adopted in 2021 through Yappy Tails rescue. Rocket was elected Mayor of the Enfield Dog Park in 2021 when he was just a pup, which brings up this reminder: GET OUT AND VOTE ON ELECTION DAY!

Rocket's favorite activities at home are playing fetch in the yard, and sitting on the top step of the deck protecting the property from squirrels. It was probably the former activity that caused all the trouble. This past July Rocket started gagging and coughing, followed by loss of appetite, and came in to see Dr. Rothbart, who found tenderness and swelling in the throat on examination and X-rays. Because Rocket is a known stick chewer, Dr.

Rothbart gave him a mild sedative to better see the back of the throat.

During this procedure Dr. Rothbart found a puncture wound just inside the entrance to Rocket's esophagus. The wound was infected and draining pus. These infections, called retropharyngeal abscesses, are usually caused by a puncture from a stick or other sharp object the patient enjoys chewing on. In some cases pieces of the stick breaks off deep in the tissues requiring invasive surgery to remove the offending material. Thankfully Rocket did not require surgery and with a course of antibiotics and pain medicine quickly improved and made a full recovery.

Rocket's problem is not at all uncommon, and care should be taken over which sticks or toys are used for fetch. Ideally, find something that doesn't easily split or break, but that is soft enough to satisfy a happy chewer.

Rocket is back to normal, allowing the kids in his family to dress him up in costumes and be much too cuddly with him. For serving as a cautionary tale to happy chewers, and to give us a chance to remind everyone to do their civic duty at the polls, we're happy to name Rocket our November 2024 Suffield Veterinary Hospital 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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