

Suffield Veterinary Hospital April 2025 Patient of the Month

Meet Cooper, a dapper 9-year-old neutered male Labrador retriever, owned and adored by Jodie Albano and her family. Cooper has been part of the clan since he was a rambunctious, bouncy, chew-up-everything puppy, and though more sedate as he's aged, he still loves to steal flip flops and pool towels. He used to make a game out of it and make you chase him to retrieve the stolen items, but now he'll drop them when asked. A good boy.



Cooper went in for his yearly visit in November and had no symptoms. A full blood work up was done to get some baseline numbers. His liver values came back high. He was put on Denamarin, a liver support supplement, for 30 days and retested. Despite the supplement, his liver tests had increased significantly. Since there is a long list of things that might cause liver issues, the Albanos were referred to the Internal Medicine staff at Integrity Veterinary Center. Jodie describes what happened next:

"We had an ultrasound at Integrity in Northampton in December that showed his liver was smaller than normal and his lining was coarse. In addition to Denamarin, he was put on Ursodiol and Vitamin E. We then scheduled a consultation with Pieper Veterinary and ultimately had a laparoscopic liver biopsy performed. Based on finding very high copper levels in the biopsy, we determined he has Copper Storage Disease. In

addition to his current meds, he was put on D-Penicillamine, Vitamin B-6. He also had to go on a low copper diet, including all treats. This treatment is more than likely life long."

Copper Storage disease, sometimes called copper associated hepatitis, is a condition only recognized as common in Labrador retrievers in the past decade. While the cause is not yet fully understood in this breed, it is a multifactorial disease, involving a complex inheritance pattern and diet. Cooper is not unique in our practice, as we have several Labrador patients that are being treated for copper toxicity, including some sicker than Cooper and one that died from it.

Fortunately, Dr. Burke was able to diagnose Cooper early from routine blood tests, and we expect his condition to be controlled. His family can continue to play one of their favorite games: guess the time (in minutes) that it will take Cooper to destroy a new toy — it is typically under 20 minutes. For letting us share his story, we gratefully name Cooper our April 2025 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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