

Zara and the corn cob

Case Study—July 2011

“Zara” is a 16 month old spayed female Labrador, who likes to chew anything and everything in her path. Unknown to her parents, she managed to find some dumped fast food leftovers on her daily walk and it turned into a disaster!

Zara normally loves going for a morning walk, and can't wait for her breakfast. So Zara's parents knew she was in trouble when they woke up one morning to find their normally bouncy Labrador reluctant to get off her bed. Her tail was still wagging but she had big sad eyes and she was not the slightest bit interested in her food. For a Labrador, and especially Zara, this was very unusual!

On arrival at Nicklin Way Veterinary Surgery, Zara was examined by one of the vets. She had severe abdominal pain and she was running a fever. She was also quite dehydrated and her heart rate was fast. Her parents had not seen her vomiting at home, but her breath smelt like she had been sick.

Zara was admitted for x-rays of her abdomen and blood tests to check her internal organ function. Whilst these were being processed in-house, she was started on a drip and given some pain relief and medications to reduce her nausea. As Zara's health care was covered by Pet Insurance, Zara's parents could breathe easier knowing that the cost of treatment wasn't going to be a factor in getting their pet back to full health.

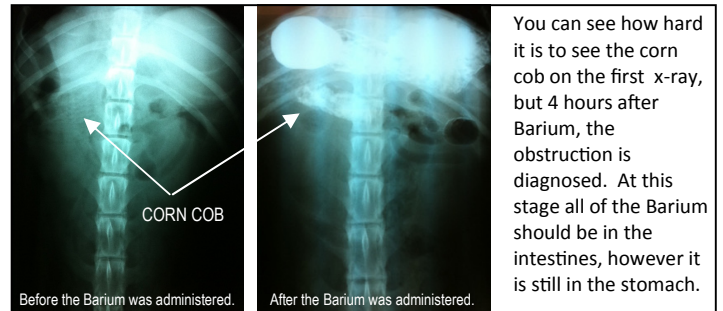
Zara's blood tests showed dehydration and infection, and her electrolytes were abnormal indicating that she must have vomited quite a few times during the night. Pancreatitis, liver and kidney problems were ruled out within 30 minutes of her admission. Antibiotics were administered through her drip line.

Her x-rays showed a 'possible' foreign body in her intestines which looked like a corn cob, but she hadn't had access to any. It could not be felt by the veterinarians because she was too tense in her abdomen, and the foreign body was located up under the rib cage.

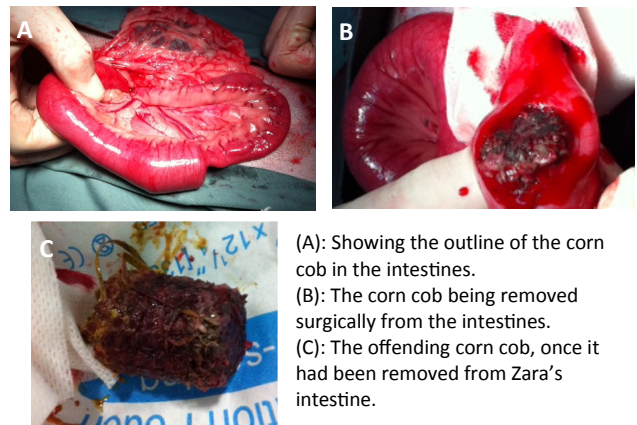
To assist with the diagnosis, and determine whether Zara needed surgery, she was given some



Barium mixed with a small amount of food, and some more x-rays were taken a few hours later. These x-rays clearly showed a blockage in her bowels.



By now Zara was well hydrated from her drip, and she was immediately taken into theatre, where a corn cob was surgically removed from her intestine.



The following day she was bouncing around the treatment room, licking and kissing the nurses, and her whole body was wagging in true Labrador fashion. She was discharged from hospital once she drank some water and ate a small amount of boiled chicken breast....she thought we were starving her, and ate with Labrador gusto!

Zara led her parents to the source of her corn cob two weeks later, on their daily walk...some discarded fast food, still with chicken bones in situ.

Please be careful when your pets are off lead, and if you notice them eating something unusual on their walk, it is always a good idea to have them checked over. Zara is one very lucky little lady, and her parents were very relieved that they have Pet Insurance to cover the costs of the 'corn cob incident'.