

Jemma's altercation with a 4WD

Case Study—June 2011

"Jemma" is 12 month old spayed female Staffordshire Bull Terrier, who accidentally slipped her collar on her usual daily walk and was hit by an oncoming car.

Her mum quickly bundled her up and immediately raced her to the Nicklin Way Veterinary Surgery. A quick phone call before leaving the house meant that by the time Jemma arrived, our team of friendly staff were prepared for her arrival.

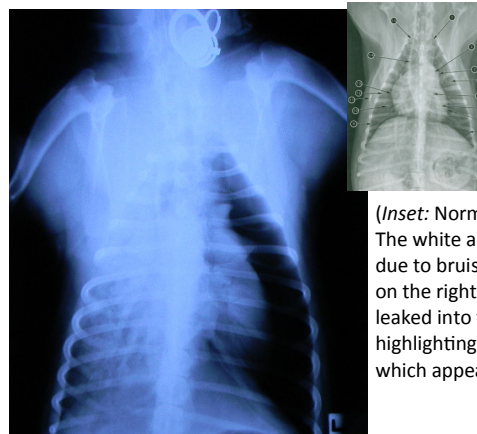
Jemma had a tail injury, but more importantly she was having trouble breathing. Oxygen was delivered through a face mask, but she didn't improve. She was started on a drip and given pain relief to treat her shock but her breathing was getting worse by the minute.

When the vets listened to her chest they could not hear any lung sounds which meant there was air or blood inside her chest cavity, surrounding her lungs. As Jemma was gasping for air, she became agitated and was given some sedation. As she was not stable enough to take x-rays in order to reach a diagnosis, an emergency procedure was performed to drain her chest with a needle.

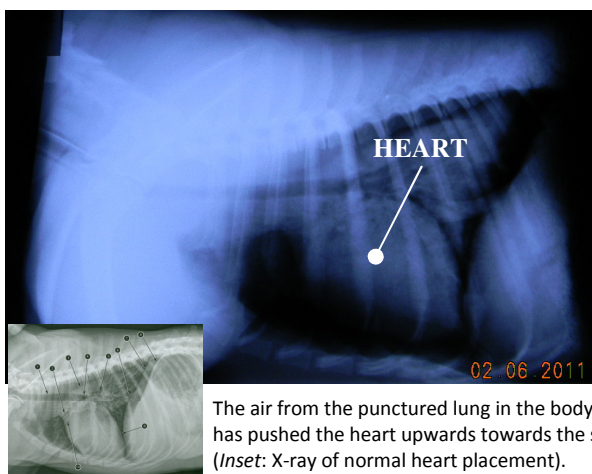
This confirmed Jemma had a pneumothorax, or free air in her chest cavity. Her lungs had been punctured during the accident and filled her chest cavity with air making it impossible for her lungs to expand. Over two litres of air was removed from the right side of her chest after which Jemma began to breathe much better.



At this stage chest x-rays were taken to reveal the full extent of her injuries. She had badly bruised and punctured lungs on both sides, and her lungs had collapsed. The air was rapidly building up again from the lung tear so an indwelling chest drain was placed to continually extract air as it leaked out... 600ml every 5mins! Jemma also had a nasal oxygen line placed to assist with her breathing and she was placed in our intensive care ward.



(Inset: Normal lung x-ray).
The white area on the left lung is due to bruising. The black area on the right side is air that has leaked into the chest cavity, highlighting the collapsed lungs which appear like leaflets.



The air from the punctured lung in the body cavity has pushed the heart upwards towards the spine.
(Inset: X-ray of normal heart placement).

Over the next 48 hours our intensive care nurses drained Jemma's chest day and night until the lung tear sealed, the air build up reduced, and the drain could be removed. Jemma was improving every day and by the third day her oxygen line was removed and she was happily walking about.

Jemma is a lively little dog, and required strict bed rest to allow the bruising in her lungs to heal as there was a risk of the lung tear reopening if she raced about. Her parents decided to board her at the surgery for a week until she was given the all clear to go home. We were delighted to have her at the surgery as Jemma loves cuddles and she was spoilt rotten.

Jemma made a full recovery, and is one very lucky little dog