



media release

Monday 25 March 2013

EMERGENCY SURGERY FOR DOG THAT ATE KEBAB STICK AHT vets perform emergency operation to remove kebab stick which had pierced Springer Spaniel's vital organs

Reggie, a 15-month-old Springer Spaniel dog from Ipswich, attended a check-up today at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) two months after the emergency surgery that saved his life.

Reggie was referred to the AHT's specialist veterinary surgery team on 11 January. His owners were extremely concerned that he may have eaten a kebab stick, which he had stolen from the family's kitchen. An ultrasound and MRI scan quickly identified that Reggie had ingested the kebab stick which was causing him extreme pain and discomfort.

However the extent of the damage was much worse than anyone could have imagined. The kebab stick was not only present within the stomach, but it had ruptured through the stomach wall, perforating Reggie's liver and diaphragm and was protruding into his heart sac. The damage was so severe, inflammation was starting to become visible externally along Reggie's breast bone.

Reggie was immediately rushed in for major surgery. In order to remove the stick and repair the damage to his vital organs, three body cavities (stomach, chest and heart sac) had to be opened. In total the surgery took three hours, and involved a large and dedicated surgical and critical care team to get him through the operation.

Daniela Murgia, who leads the AHT's soft tissue surgery team, said: "I have never seen a case like this before. The fact that the kebab stick had not just been ingested, but had managed to perforate so many vital organs was astonishing.

"But what was even more surprising was that Reggie had survived for a few days in that intense state of discomfort before he came in as an emergency. I'm just so glad we were able to operate in time.

“It has been a long recovery for Reggie. Due to the extent of the internal damage, his organs have needed a lot of time to heal properly. His owners have had to be really careful in order to make sure that he remained as still as possible for the first few weeks after the surgery, to make sure that he didn’t rupture any stitches, which isn’t easy with a Springer Spaniel!”

Reggie returned to the AHT for a check-up and a further ultrasound scan on Monday 25 March, so that Daniela could assess his internal healing. Pleased with the scan results, Daniela was glad to be able to give Reggie the all clear.

Reggie’s owners, Mr Pete Everett and Mrs Justine Barber, said: “We can’t thank Daniela and her team enough for everything they have done for Reggie. He wouldn’t be here now if it wasn’t for them! We still can’t believe just how much damage the kebab stick was able to cause him in such a short amount of time.

“We’ve got two dogs, and like most dog owners we’re always really careful to keep things that might be harmful well out of their reach. Unfortunately the dogs teamed up to knock the tray of food off the counter. It just goes to show what can happen, and that you need to be extra, extra careful.

“We were extremely worried that he might have ingested one of the sticks and took him to our vets as soon as he started to appear out of sorts. I’m so glad we were referred to the Animal Health Trust and that they were able to save our boy!”

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For further information, please contact:

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Please credit all images to the Animal Health Trust.

Additional notes:

- The **Animal Health Trust** is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit our website at www.aht.org.uk