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"Polly" - Westie with a Xmas Tinsel Problem



Polly

I had the unfortunate task to be on call over the New Year period. One of my patients that weekend was a westie called Polly.

Polly has been coming to our practice for a long time, and I was called out because she was suffering from diarrhoea. She also had stopped eating over the last few days.

The owners told me that Polly had had some treats over the Christmas period from visiting friends. Normally Polly is on a strict diet, because she has a sensitive stomach, so it was thought that these treats had set off a gastroenteritis, causing extremely liquid motions.

Polly was put on a drip to give her supportive treatment, and prevent her from getting dehydrated. The next day she was still lethargic, and not interested in her food at all, and I decided to do a blood test. This test did show no abnormalities, however later that day our head nurse noticed that she had vomited. On close inspection it looked like there was some evidence that it contained tinsel.

When I discussed this with the owner it turned out that their Christmas tree was decorated with tinsel, and they had also found some in the garden. That was when I began to worry about a foreign body being stuck in the bowels, and we decided that if there was no improvement overnight we would have to x-ray Polly's tummy.

However, on arrival the next morning, Erain, our head nurse had noticed a strange object sticking from Polly's bottom. When she pulled it, a strand of tinsel about 40cm long appeared!!

After further discussion with the owners it became clear that Polly had already showed some mild symptoms of illness a few weeks back, which is often the case in partial obstructions. This is common as it can take as long as four weeks before these problems can be detected, because the onset can give very mild and vague symptoms.

Luckily Polly is now on the mend, and the owners will have a whole year to reconsider their festive decorations for next Christmas.

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

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