



Healthy dog to almost dead

Scout's near-death experience with pancreatitis

By Rob S. and A. Kozak

Rob S. was thrilled to adopt Scout last fall. He'd met Scout during his home visit and fell in love, but the time wasn't right to adopt and he sadly passed him up. A month later, he checked the GSRNC website and Scout was still available for adoption! Within days, he brought Scout home.

Scout had always been thin, despite eating more than enough for a dog his size and with his energy level. Both GSRNC and Rob were curious about this, but three vets gave Scout a clean bill of health.

But on St. Patrick's Day Scout developed an awful case of bloody diarrhea so Rob leashed him up and headed to the vet. Normally when Rob unlocks his car Scout slams his butt down on the driveway and stares at Rob eagerly, awaiting the "Place!" command to get in the back seat. This time he just put his paw on the floorboard and hung his head - he was too weak to obey. Rob was scared.

Upon arrival the vet weighed Scout - he'd lost almost 5 pounds in 2 months. When he saw a picture of Scout's diarrhea the vet said, "This is bad". Now Rob was *really* scared. The vet immediately inserted an IV and started pumping fluids and meds into Scout. Rob was told to leave Scout there and call later to check in. Rob said, "No way I'm leaving Scout alone." So, they put a blanket and a chair in one of the kennels and Rob started his vigil.



Scout lay at Rob's feet all morning, hardly moving. But, after about three hours Scout raised his head and started to show some life. Eight hours later Scout was still weak, but he got the ok to go home. He'd taken two liters of fluids!

Rob wanted to know: what happened? The vet determined that Scout had *acute pancreatitis*.

Pancreatitis is hard to diagnose. The symptoms (Like vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and lethargy) might be mistaken for something less serious. Dogs usually recover from mild cases, but if it's severe, it can sometimes lead to death.

The condition happens when the pancreas, which helps digest food and control blood sugar, becomes inflamed by overactive enzymes. This causes damage to the pancreas, surrounding tissue and other organs.

The condition is most commonly caused by fatty foods, like bacon grease or table scraps; in some cases, there may be a genetic predisposition. Unfortunately, once a dog has had a bout of *pancreatitis*, the chance of recurrence is high.

Two days after Scout's experience, however, it was like nothing happened. He was back to his goofy self and wanted to play, play, play so they did, did, did. Scout took medication for three weeks and by then his stool was firm and he had no noticeable symptoms of any ailment. A follow up visit revealed normal blood work and... Scout weighed 70 pounds!

His vet believed the illness was behind Scout's inability to gain weight all along. It just took a near death experience for it to become obvious what the problem was.

