



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Blossom" - Westie with Oesophageal Blockage



Blossom

We frequently warn owners about the potential perils of letting their dogs have cooked bones. After cooking, bones (and chicken bones in particular) are more brittle, and if dogs chew on them they frequently break up into sharp, splinter-like fragments.

Fluid in the bowels is mainly re-absorbed into the body when it reaches the large intestine, thus any bone fragments tend to get as far as this and then form a sharp, prickly mass as the water is removed. Needless to say - this is, quite literally, a pain in the backside...not just for the dog, but for the vet who has to perform an enema to remove the mass. (I have spent several Christmas nights doing so, after the turkey carcass!)

Blossom's owners were sensible enough not to allow her to have the bone from their joint this week - but they held the bone to allow her to lick at it. Unfortunately, Blossom had other ideas, and tried to grab the bone, tearing off and hastily swallowing a chunk of cartilaginous gristle.

The following day, she was extremely subdued, and could not even drink water without vomiting it back. Blossom's owners brought her to the surgery, and asked me if the fragment could be stuck in her gullet. I replied that it was extremely unusual for this to happen, and much more likely that it was in her small intestine - the commonest place for "foreign bodies" to lodge.

To my surprise, when I x-rayed Blossom I found that her owner was right - it was indeed wedged in the oesophagus, about 5cm before the stomach entrance.

Is far trickier to remove such items than those lodged in the intestines. We cannot simply cut into the chest to get to the oesophagus, in the way we are able to cut into the abdomen to get to the intestines. Thus, we either have to pull the foreign body back up out of the mouth, or grasp it from the stomach end and pull it downwards.

Using an endoscope to see what we were doing, and a specialised pair of forceps (some 2 feet long) my colleague Ingrid managed to grasp the bone fragment and withdraw it through Blossom's mouth. A great relief for all involved!

I'd like to think Blossom has learnt her lesson and will avoid bones in future, but judging by the fact that she was scrounging for food only the next day, I doubt this will be the case!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

***You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care***