



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



### "Murphy" - Cocker Spaniel with EPI



Murphy



"Murphy" is a Cocker Spaniel and he was rescued about 1 year ago by his current owners. Shortly after his adoption, his motions became very loose and sloppy. Despite dietary control and medication, there was no great improvement in his condition. Consequently, "Murphy" had a ravenous appetite, consumed large volumes of food, but continued to lose weight.

Investigation of this kind of problem involves a series of logical steps of laboratory tests. Checking for gastro-intestinal bugs (endoparasites, pathogenic bacteria...) and blood samples to look for systemic diseases. Malabsorption occurs when a patient is unable to obtain all the "goodness" from his diet that he should. As a result, 'what goes in one end..... goes out the other!' An unpleasant experience for both patient and owner alike!

The final diagnosis was exocrine pancreatic insufficiency or EPI. This is an inability to properly digest food due to a lack of digestive enzymes produced by the pancreas. This is usually due to shrinkage of the pancreas. This can be caused by previous infections, blocked pancreatic ducts, chronic inflammation, immune-mediated disorders or genetics. In humans it is often associated with cystic fibrosis and can be one of the first symptoms of this disease. Symptoms most commonly seen in dogs include weight loss, chronic diarrhoea, flatulence, increased appetite, poor hair coat and sometimes coprophagia.

The treatment that Murphy receives consists of supplying pancreatic enzymes which are added to the diet and Vitamin B12 injections as he also suffered from anaemia. Dogs with EPI need lifelong treatment so Murphy is extremely lucky to be insured.

Since the treatment has started, Murphy improved considerably. His motions are back to normal, he's gained weight and he's livelier than he ever was before. His owners are also relieved that there is a lot less to "dispose of" than before!

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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)

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