

Kyra Gilder – August Pet Of The Month

Cambridge Vet Services Pet of the Season for winter 2014 is Kyra Gilder, a nine year old west highland white bitch, owned by Maureen Gilder.

Maureen came to Cambridge 8 years ago, and set up the Cambridge cattery, a resort for feline pets to vacation in whilst their owners were visiting their own luxury resorts. A young Kyra came with her, and in the fertile Waikato region, embarked on a breeding career, producing 5 litters before retiring. Maureen has kept two of her puppies, appropriately named Mae (West) and Wendy (Darling). Three bitches in one house- potential for conflict!

Fortunately the two daughters' knew their place, and Kyra remained unchallenged as the matriarch.

Harmony reigned, until Maureen and daughter Karen decided to train a puppy for Karen's sister Dianne. Sky, a 3 month old Lab x Collie, came to stay, and being an adorable puppy, received a lot of favorable attention. The older matron was not ready to accept a usurper, and there were constant grumbings between the two. Finally two weeks before Christmas, the grumbling erupted into a full blown scrap.

Many dog fights are vocally fearsome, whilst physically benign, with a dominant party quickly established.

However, often in a dominance contest between two bitch housemates, no holds are barred, and serious injuries are inflicted.

Kyra versus Skye was no exception. With her height advantage Skye managed to clamp Kyra's scruff between her teeth, then shook her like a ragdoll. Maureen heard the furore, and managed to prize Kyra from Skye's jaws before her neck snapped. Maureen examined the poor dog. The damage didn't look too bad. Two puncture wounds over her right shoulder, but no deep gashes, no broken bones. Knowing that dog bites usually become infected, she popped her into the clinic for a checkup, and hoped that a course of pills would see her right.

At the clinic, Veterinarian Janine Devaney examined Kyra carefully. She noted the puncture wounds, and then probed them to assess the tissue damage beneath. Unfortunately she found deep cavities, where a dinner plate sized piece of skin had been ripped off the underlying tissue. Did it retain blood supply? Were the small arterioles supplying life supporting oxygen intact? Only time would tell.

Janine carefully placed drains in the cavity, and treated Kyra with antibiotics and pain killers. Initially all went well, the skin appeared viable and the initial discharge dried up. However, suddenly, a week after the fateful fight, the carefully replaced skin died and rotted, leaving a huge saddle shaped wound running from elbow to elbow.

Fortunately, dogs have quite a bit of extra loose skin, enough to stretch over a defect of this size. However, first we needed a healthy, bug free bed of granulation tissue to receive the donor skin. Nature would need some time, and a little help, to provide this. Antibiotics must be given to control infection, pain killers to relieve discomfort, and protective bandages regularly changed to keep the wound moist and healthy. A lot of work.

Maureen was finding it hard to nurse Kyra at home, so the westie remained in hospital, with the full body bandage changed every couple of days. Unfortunately she would be in hospital over Christmas and New Year, a miserable fate as the clinic would be closed and lonely. Fortunately vet nurse Andrea Longley took pity on the wee pooch and took her home over the holidays to join her menagerie. Not only did Kyra enjoy having her bandage regularly changed, but also enjoyed a roast turkey for Christmas dinner, and went first footing on Hogmanay (although Andrea refused to cook Haggis).

In the New Year Janine was able to stretch some of her surplus skin over the large wound, and carefully suture it in place.

Quite an ordeal for wee Kyra, who was relieved to find on her return home, her nemesis Skye, banished to greener pastures. Good luck for the future Kyra and Maureen!

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Pet Of The Month

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Kyra in her Christmas themed bandaging