
What's In A Name

By Angela Shipley

For this twelve year old registered West Highland White Terrier, his name says it all -- "Lucky" Max McKool Shipley.

But that's far from being the whole story.

Four years ago this past December, after multiple veterinary visits and no solutions, the Shipleys brought their little Westie to Suburbia North to see Dr. McGuire, who happened to be a classmate at Texas A & M of their previous veterinarian. Within 24 hours, Lucky had been diagnosed with testicular cancer and immediate surgery was done. Within weeks he was back up and going with all the vim, vigor and vitality of a puppy. At that particular point in time, Lucky's diet was changed to IVD vegetarian formula kibble, which not only helped in his recovery, but also eliminated any skin problems that the Shipleys had been dealing with for the past several years.

Then on Thursday of Mother's Day weekend, almost two years ago, Lucky became

extremely ill. In less than three days he went from energetic and vivacious to a point where he wouldn't eat or drink and



anything that he ate came right back up. At that point in time he was having difficulties walking and was constantly shaking. With Suburbia North being closed for the weekend, the Shipleys took Lucky to an emergency clinic near their house in Sugar Land. He was observed for several hours, but no final diagnosis was given other than he might be allergic to the tick and flea monthly topical medicine that the

Shipleys had applied earlier in the week. Each day Lucky's health deteriorated and with a dog that normally weighs less

than 20 pounds with him not eating or drinking it began to get rather scary. He started to show signs of dehydration and wouldn't urinate.

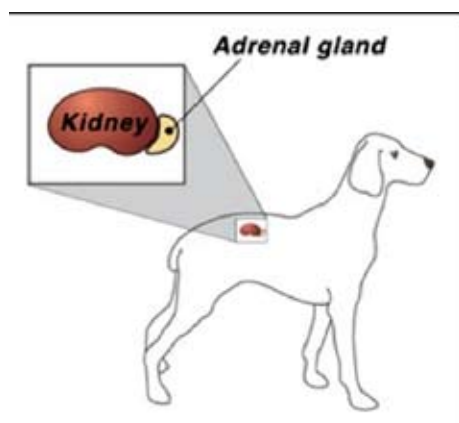
First thing Monday morning, the Shipleys headed to Suburbia North where Lucky's medical information from the Emergency Clinic had been faxed. By the time they arrived, Dr. McGuire had suspicions of what was happening, but wanted to run blood work to be sure. Lucky was immediately put on

I.V. fluids. The blood work showed Addison's Disease, a disease that can also be found in humans.

The correct medical term for this disease is Hypoadrenocorticism. This term means that there is diminished or lowered hormone production from the outer part or cortex of the adrenal gland. The adrenal

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glands are paired glands next to the kidneys. The glands produce several vital substances, which regulate a variety of body functions and are necessary to sustain life.

The most widely known of these substances is cortisol, commonly called cortisone, produced by the outer part of the adrenal cortex. Also produced by the cortex and equally important is aldosterone, which is a mineral-corticoid hormone. This hormone regulates the electrolyte and water balance of the body and is involved in the excretion

of potassium and retention of sodium.

The Shipleys left Lucky at Suburbia North for several days while they worked to rebalance his system and rehydrate his little body. At that point we weren't sure that Lucky was going to make it. Within the week, Lucky had turned the corner. By the time Lucky was able to come home, the Shipleys had researched Addison's Disease and with the help of the staff at Suburbia North, Lucky was started on daily doses of Prednisone and has been coming in for Percorten (steroid) shots every 25 days.

The Shipleys learned that Addison's Disease was usually diagnosed in dogs between the ages of 3 and 4, so the fact that Lucky was being diagnosed at age nine was rather remarkable. They have since found that with conscientious commitment to regular daily doses of Prednisone and staying on top of the Percorten injections approximately every 25 days that Lucky has been able to continue a VERY normal life.

Over the past three years, additional blood work has been done from time to time to make sure Lucky's system is balanced correctly and that he's receiving the correct dosages of Percorten or Prednisone to keep



This photo was taken when the Shipleys took Lucky with them camping in Colorado in July 2007 after Lucky was diagnosed in early May with Addison's Disease.

the Addison's Disease at bay, but the Shipleys have seen very few signs of Lucky slowing down due to the Addison's. Lucky is getting older and this winter he's had eye surgery to restore his vision, but

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this little Westie is hardier than ever.

The Shipleys haven't had to change their lifestyle to accommodate Lucky's medical needs and Lucky's going strong. If you have a dog that has been diagnosed with Addison's Disease, don't feel that it can't be managed or that you have to go through heroics to meet your dog's needs. The daily treatment takes less than 30 seconds – administering a small pill each day. The monthly treatment involves a regular veterinary visit every 25 days for an injection based on your dog's weight. The Shipleys highly encourage you to talk with your veterinarian if costs are a factor in the treatment of your pet to see what your options can be.

The Shipleys believe that "the joy that Lucky brings their family has been worth the time, commitment and expense of meeting his medical needs."



Spring 2003



Spring 2005



Christmas 2009



Fall 2009

Westie News Goes Electronic!

In an effort to be conscientious about the environment while also making the most use of our limited resources, the Westie Foundation plans to send the Fall and Spring issues of the newsletters electronically. The Summer and Winter issues will continue to be mailed. All quarterly issues will also be available and archived online at the Westie Foundation website (www.westiefoundation.org).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Send us your email address so you'll receive the electronic newsletter! Go to www.westiefoundation.org and click on the "Contact Us".

