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Wed, 2010-06-23 15:02 — Robin Olson

When any of my cats are sick, I get stressed out. I don't feel better until I know **THEY** are feeling better. Imagine knowing your cat is not well for 1 year and 8 months (*and counting*). It's stressful for me. It's more stressful for my poor cat, Gracie.



©2010 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracie (left) with daughter, Petunia (right)

Since February, I've been treating Gracie's miliary dermatitis homeopathically. It was starting to show signs of improving, but...in the middle of the treatment, I messed around with their food a bit and that might have caused Gracie's condition to worsen, so I went back to her very plain, raw diet.

Was the damage done? Was it too late? Gracie had a terrible self-mutilation on the inside of her right leg. I treated it and she seemed to be getting better, but today, after noticing her lose her appetite for a few days, I knew something was wrong. I thought her anal glands were impacted and I imagined it would make for a humorous blog post. Dr. Larry checked Gracie out today and her anal glands were fine, she had no fever, but had lost 7 ounces-which in a short period of time, is a lot of weight. Now I imagined writing something more sobering.

Then we looked at Gracie's abdomen. I don't think I should post a clear photo of it because it was "that bad." She had not only hurt the inside of her right leg (*which I just checked a few days ago!*), but she was starting on her left. On top of that Dr. Larry said she is getting an infection so there was no choice but to put her on antibiotics, which trashed the homeopathic treatments she was getting.

We discussed the "S-word" ...**STEROIDS** and I was very close to just saying; "YES! DO IT." I've read too many BAD things about steroids to take a chance with them even if I know it will help Gracie for the short term. The steroids would effect Gracie's skin and her immune system. To give her antibiotics and steroids together? I just couldn't open her up to even more problems down the road.



My poor sweetie.

Gracie's still with Dr. Larry. Super-Deb is giving her a soothing bath (*no steroids!!*) and they're going to shoot an x-ray to make sure Gracie isn't so full of fur that she's not eating as a result (*or keeping her food down as of this morning*)

I'm going to try two more things, then I may fall onto the steroid sword and give that to Gracie as a last resort.

1. We're going to try [Allerderm® Spot-On](#) ^[2] to soothe Gracie's skin.
2. Treat Gracie's anxiety homeopathically, instead of trying to treat Gracie's skin condition. If Gracie stops this OCD-ish behavior and feels better, maybe her skin will improve?

I keep wanting to just give up, but I look at Gracie's sweet face. She's such a kind cat. Truly would never hurt anyone. She is depending on me and I can't and won't let her down. I just wish she knew that.

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Comments

Wed, 2010-06-23 15:21 — [ZoeEmEffGee](#) ^[14]

[oh wow](#) ^[15]

Poor baby :(I hope you find a solution soon!!!

Wed, 2010-06-23 16:34 — [Ingrid King \(not verified\)](#) ^[16]

[some thoughts on steroids](#) ^[17]

Oh Robin, I'm so sorry! I know how hard you've worked at trying to find a solution for Gracie by following her story on your site.

I'll offer these thoughts on steroids - and feel free to reject them if they don't resonate. I'm the just as reluctant to use steroids as you are, for all the same reasons. They interfere, or rather, negate, holistic treatments, they have horrible longterm side

effects, and on a personal note, my decision (made jointly with my vet) to use short-term steroids when Amber got sick may have contributed to complicating her disease process, and perhaps ultimately led to her succumbing to the virus that ravaged her system. So believe me, I don't take steroids lightly.

That being said, in a situation like Gracie's, I might consider them for short-term relief. It's not like you haven't given other treatments every possible chance. Perhaps the choice you may need to make is to provide relief despite the longterm problems the steroids might be causing? Yes, you may shorten Gracie's life, but you may increase her quality of life by providing relief and have a happier kitty? I know it's agonizing to make such a decision, and I think it's especially difficult when it goes against our orientation when it comes to holistically treating conditions. Anyway - for what it's worth, this popped into my head as I was reading your update, and I thought I'd offer this to you.

More than anything, though, please don't ever think you've not done enough for Gracie. I don't know too many people who would hang in there as long as you have with something this challenging.

Wed, 2010-06-23 18:21 — Anne (not verified)

ugh this breaks my heart.. i ^[18]

ugh this breaks my heart.. i hate feeling helpless when it comes to my furbabies.. i hope you find the answer soon..

~Anne

Thu, 2010-06-24 02:41 — [acninee](#) ^[19]

Poor Gracie and poor you. If ^[20]

Poor Gracie and poor you. If care and efforts will solve the situation, well you put plenty of that in. So my love and good thoughts to Gracie, give her a little pat for me, please.

Fri, 2010-06-25 12:06 — Everycat (not verified)

Gracie ^[21]

I just read back about poor Gracie and the problems she has. You are really working hard to help her, I take my hat off to you there. I understand your fears about steroids. If used excessively, yes they can cause all manner of problems, but in appropriate doses in the very short term they can be life savers. I think it would be worth using steroids this time to get her some immediate relief. Depomedrol/depomedron) aren't the only ones available either.

She's on a great diet, but as she's having antibiotics again, would you consider giving her a probiotic as well? Gut flora can be messed up (and affect the whole cat) for a long time.

The other thing that sprang to mind was to have her hormone levels checked re' oestrogen. Oestrogen deficient alopecia can look like this. We had a spayed female years ago who had the hair loss, then that turned into the self mutilating/overgrooming behaviour, just on the tummy and back legs. She had a short course of a synthetic oestrogen and within months the skin had settled and the fur grew back.

Wishing dear Gracie all the best and hope you can find something to help her soon

Jane

Sun, 2010-06-27 20:27 — Sydneymom (not verified)

Digestive enzymes? ^[22]

Poor Gracie.. and my hat off to you Robin for your determination to cure her. I read a while back about digestive enzymes being helpful in alleviating itchiness and hot spots in cats and dogs. My holistic vet advised me to add digestive enzymes (I use ProZyme) to Sydney's food to optimize digestion. In a short period of time, his coat turned really soft and shiny. Who knows, maybe it might help Gracie with her skin problems... Maybe you can ask Dr Larry for his opinion?

Ivy

Mon, 2010-06-28 00:21 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[23]

Great! ^[24]

Thank you, Ivy. I will look into that! :-)

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