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## FCJ: The News We've Been Waiting for About CARA

Sun, 2011-03-06 14:39 — Robin Olson

*I feel hungover from interrupted sleep, and little of it. I can't imagine how Cara feels in comparison. From the look of her, I'd say she feels a lot worse than I do. The last 24 hours have been difficult.*

Yesterday we started fundraising for Cara's Vet Care so we could get funds for her to have an Endoscopy. It's a much needed diagnostic test that we hoped would lead us closer to finding out what's wrong with Cara.

**We were very lucky that a compassionate, anonymous person (really a Guardian Angel) came forward and offered to LOAN us enough money to get the test done. It WOULDN'T solve our fundraising problem because we have to pay it back, but at least we could move fast and get the test done.** I was able to book her an appointment within an hour of getting help from Cara's Guardian Angel.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Cara, ready to just play and love life just hours before her procedure.

It was a good thing we didn't wait another SECOND longer. **We have answers.** No more tests needed. **It's not good news.**

**Cara's esophagus is in TERRIBLE shape. It's filled with bloody ulcers. The lining of the esophagus is thickened from being so irritated.**

**Cara has TWO strictures**-which is a closing of the esophagus due to, in Cara's case, either a genetic component or the fact that she had Doxycycline at such an early age (*which I didn't know was something that can cause a problem and I need to look into this further*). **One of the strictures was SO SMALL they could not get the scope into her stomach-how was she getting any food at all?**

**Cara must be in HORRIFIC PAIN.** Think of the worst sore throat you ever had, times 10. Every time you eat it hurts. No wonder Cara was vomiting! The food could barely pass into her stomach, yet she was losing vital nutrients and was SO VERY HUNGRY at the same time!

The options:

**Balloon dilation.** Just what it sounds like. Under anesthesia, they insert a small balloon into the esophagus and inflate it very carefully. It forces the esophagus open. Then they inject a small amount of steroid into the thickened tissue to get the swelling down.

**If they do this, the esophagus can tear, the chest fills with air and you have a VERY SERIOUS LIFE THREATENING situation on your hands, but you HAVE to do something because soon, Cara will not be able to pass ANY FOOD into her stomach.**

If the dilation works, **then they would want to insert a feeding tube into Cara.** It would bypass her esophagus and go right into her stomach. I've heard about feeding tubes and how they can cause more problems than they solve. They can become infected, come out-which results in emergency gastric surgery. Considering Cara's in a room with her family and is a playful kitten, I couldn't imagine doing this to her. I also didn't feel I had the "chops" to provide that level of care without making a deadly mistake. I wanted to talk to Dr. Larry and find out if he could board Cara and provide her care for the two

weeks we'd need if we put her on a feeding tube. I needed more time to think, but didn't have the luxury of having any.

I tried to stay calm while the Internist, Dr. K. gave me the news, but inside my heart was breaking. **Would Cara ever have a normal life?** Would she ever have a home of her own?

The Vet told me that Cara could have a good future, but that **there was also a very good chance that the strictures would recur-soon. That the procedure would probably need to be re-done up to 3 times, before the stricture would stop closing up.** Cara would have to be on a high calorie, liquid diet during this time.

Cara could also end up having to be on a liquid diet for the rest of her life and face having a stricture issue recur even if we fix her up now. That yes, **it will cost money to provide the care, but no where NEAR the cost of the surgery to fix a PRAA, which would have been at least another \$5000.00 on top of the money we needed for the balloon dilation, so that was good.**

The Vet wanted to know if as a rescue group, if she should proceed with the treatment. She'd do the best she could for us regarding costs, but I could read between the lines of what she was really asking.

My reply was simple: **We do NOT EUTHANIZE ANIMALS BECAUSE OF MONEY.** She sounded relieved. I gave her the okay to do the dilation, but to hold off on the feeding tube. My hope is to see how we do for a few days. IF we can get Cara comfortable and eating well, she may heal on her own if she survives the dilation.

There are so many IFs. It's very tough to know what's best, but **I knew that I'd be risking all sorts of extra trouble inserting a feeding tube.** One step at a time...

The Vet called me a short while later. **The dilation went VERY well.** In fact she said that it just "popped" open and did so well enough that they could re-insert the scope and see into Cara's stomach. She said; *"it looked beautiful."* That was a BIG RELIEF.

They kept Cara for about five hours after the procedure. Sam and I picked her up late last night, along with a huge BAG of medications and a two page list of directions for her care.

Sam drove and I ended up holding Cara, swathed in a big towel. She stretched out her front legs across my shoulder and put her head down and closed her eyes. Her front legs were both shaved in a band around half way up her leg. It made her paws look like she was wearing white mittens. Cara felt like a dead weight, which was very unnerving. She just laid on me, barely moving, the entire drive home. This wasn't the bouncy full-of-life kitten I'd seen just a few hours earlier. **I felt panicked about my ability to provide the right care for this little sweetheart and her ability to survive the treatment.**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Cara, this morning, after endoscopy. Not eating much and obviously feeling dreadful.

We finally have answers to what's been ailing Cara. It's not a PRAA-Persistent Right Aortic Arch. We don't have to travel out-of-state to find a surgeon to save her life. We can do everything we need to do right here, but the problem is-**will Cara respond well to treatment or have a life filled with suffering?**

**We still need to continue to raise funds for Cara's care.** Yesterday's procedure came in under the estimate, but Cara will likely need a few more balloon dilations. We're going to cross our fingers and leave our goal as is, for now. In a week if Cara is doing well, we'll lower the goal. We never want to ask for more than we need. Every dollar is sacred.

**Thank you to the MANY people who responded right away to help Cara.** It makes all the difference to be able to provide care for this much-deserving little darling. If you can't donate any funds, PLEASE DO CONSIDER SHARING THIS POST WITH YOUR FRIENDS!

**If Cara could talk, I bet she'd say; "Thank you for thinking my life is precious and worth fighting for."**

I couldn't agree more.

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## **Comments**

Sun, 2011-03-06 15:46 — [adancingyogacat](#) (not verified)

### **Cara... the dear starving & sick kitten!** <sup>[12]</sup>

To Cara's caretakers... cld u post a link to a donation drive/Chip-in dedicated to only Cara's care? It appears tht the one posted: Boo Boo & Sniffles... is NOT! Am lighting a candle @ [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org) <sup>[13]</sup> at the CAR group of candles in tribute to Cara's healing... Plse join me!

Sincerely,

~ js/CAT!

Sun, 2011-03-06 16:01 — [jansfunnyfarm](#) (not verified) <sup>[14]</sup>

### **Cara** <sup>[15]</sup>

So sorry Cara has been going through this. It sounds painful for her and scary for you. We hope this procedure will do her much good.

Sun, 2011-03-06 16:04 — [Kalli](#) (not verified)

### **Slippery Elm Bark?** <sup>[16]</sup>

You may want to discuss with the vet using slippery elm bark powder in her food until those ulcers heal up. It's a very safe thing for cats (in fact, many people with cats in renal failure use it to bring relief from mouth ulcers), but it \*might\* interfere with the absorption of some medications, hence the discussion with the vet.

Sun, 2011-03-06 17:21 — [Teri and the ca...](#) (not verified) <sup>[17]</sup>

### **Doxy and Feeding tubes** <sup>[18]</sup>

Thank you for posting this update! Cara has been on my mind all weekend. Good news and bad news, but more good than bad for now.

Doxycycline does cause esophageal strictures/ulcers/scarring if not rinsed down immediately after giving it, with 3cc water/chicken broth/tuna juice. At the cat hospital where I work, we always send it out with a syringe and a can of a/d to mix with water to give after dosing it. This can also happen if the cat vomits up the medication, too.

Here is a link to more info:

<http://www.pensacolaapothecary.com/Research/veterinary-anti-infective-th...> <sup>[19]</sup>

<http://www.catinfo.org/?link=pillingcats> <sup>[20]</sup>

<http://www.felipedia.org/~felipedi/wiki/index.php/Oesophagitis> <sup>[21]</sup>

And feeding tubes scare people so I understand your apprehension, but were I work we put in many each year and 99% of them stay in fine, don't cause problems and give the body the nutrition it needs while healing.

We donated a few green papers to her fund today, and will watch for updates every day.

Sun, 2011-03-06 18:54 — [I HAVE CAT \(not verified\)](#) [22]

### **Bless you Robin!** [23]

You are truly and angel..poor baby Cara....she is fortunate to have you in her life. My heart is breaking reading the post....what a sweet baby. I will do all I can. Thank you for doing the same for Cara.

Tamar

PS- i think you need to rename the fund. more like live-saving fund!

Sun, 2011-03-06 20:53 — [jla0214 \(not verified\)](#)

### **Thank you, Robin!!!** [24]

Thank you for not giving up! Thank you for saying No to any more meds til you know what was wrong!

Sun, 2011-03-06 23:29 — [HubbleSpacePaws \(not verified\)](#) [25]

### **Our Purrayers are with you!** [26]

Lotsa healing purrs comin' to you from B'more.

Mon, 2011-03-07 01:10 — [Venita \(not verified\)](#) [27]

### **Feeding Tubes Save Lives** [28]

See this website ---> <http://catinfo.org/?link=feedingtubes> [29]. I am so glad that Cara is doing as well as she is. Sending a bit more money to help this honey.

Mon, 2011-03-07 08:56 — [Catnonymouse \(not verified\)](#)

### **cara'a life** [30]

I don't know. If my parents had been given the option, what would they have done? I was barely saved from a bad reaction to my polio vaccine. But my life? My health? It's been a misery... so many times I have wished I had never been born at all. But what do I know? I'm just a human being. A very sick one who has aalways wondered what it would be like to enjoy the health everyone else takes for granted.

Mon, 2011-03-07 20:50 — [db \(not verified\)](#)

### **Cara** [31]

I've been following Cara's story. Please don't not do a feeding tube if that's what she needs. My older girl has had 4 of them - 3 e tubes (which would not work for her) and 1 peg (in the stomach). She did really well, it was not hard to care for and it gave her a chance to heal after serious surgery. If I can learn to do tube feedings, you certainly can, too. My cat had a mesh body bandage on with a hole for the tube and that prevented a lot of problems. It's really not all that hard to do.

Prayers for Cara and for you.

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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