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Freya 2.0. Little Girl No More. Part 16

Wed, 2015-05-13 13:22 — Robin Olson

How did five months come and go so quickly? To say it's been a blur is an understatement. In our last chapter about Freya, it was December 2014 and she'd just had successful surgery to create a rectum so she could finally pass stool. She was barely four months old and was at very high risk of dying if the surgery didn't work or from complications after the procedure.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. My first days with Freya when she was just a tiny kitten.

Freya beat the odds. The first day I met her last September she weighed a pound and was far too tiny to operate on. **They gave her a 10% chance to survive unless I could keep her going until she was bigger.** I struggled with her-getting her nutrition, but without bulking her up more with stool. By mid-December, she was near to bursting so I had to rush her to Boston, to MSPCA-Angell Memorial, for the very delicate and rare procedure. **(For more on Freya's backstory, see the end of this post for a list of links).**



©2015 Robin AF Olson. In January Freya was doing great.

By the New Year it seemed as though everything was going in Freya's favor, finally. She began passing stool, sadly WHERE she passed it was another hurdle. I celebrated the fact that she was no longer constipated by creating the "The Poop Fairy;" a cheerful elf with a magic wand helping stool to pass (*covered in fairy dust, of course*) out of kitties who had elimination problems.



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Freya's incontinence meant keeping her on a raw diet or very high protein cooked diet because I don't want to add bulk to her output by giving her carbohydrate laden foods. At least when her stool comes out it's not (too) smelly and it's fairly dry. I call my daily routine with her: **"Going on a brown Easter egg hunt."** It's almost amusing where I find her little "eggs," though on a "bad" day I have woken up to finding smears of stool all over the protective cover on the bed.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Cooking Freya's dinner with thanks to [Jodi Ziskin](#) ^[1], our Pet Nutritionist, for her marvelous recipes and her love for Freya.

But my joy was short-lived. In mid-January Freya was due for her second distemper combination vaccination (FVRCP) booster. I honestly hate giving this vaccination since I've had quite a few kittens have a VERY bad reaction resulting in soaring high fevers, lethargy and inappetence. Freya's first vaccination made her sick, so there was every reason to think the second would effect her badly as well. The problem was, I had no idea just how bad it was about to become.

Disclaimer: this is MY experience with what happened to Freya, but it should in no way prevent you from vaccinating your cat. The FVRCP vaccination prevents Feline Panleukopenia (*which can be FATAL*), Calicivirus and Feline Rhinotracheitis virus. These are things you **NEVER** want you cat to have. Always speak with your vet about any concerns you have regarding vaccinations, but...

...barely four days after Freya's vaccination I came home from a rare trip to the movies with Sam. I looked at Freya and freaked out. The third eyelid on her right eye was covering half of her eye. I had no idea what to think other than it was an injury so I took her over to our 24hr Emergency Vet (NVS) since it was a Sunday (of course) and our regular vet was closed.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Freya, as always, never lost her cheerful attitude. She just adjusted to not being able to see well.

We were very lucky that their ophthalmologist was available. She was able to tell us that Freya's eye was fine, but she had [Horner's Syndrome](#) (2), which is a neurological disorder whose root cause could be one of many different origins. There was inflammation of the optic nerve that forced her third eyelid to rise from its otherwise normal position. There was no cure other than to wait and hope that it would resolve on its own. For now Freya was basically blind in one eye. **Add that to her ever-growing list of deformities and this cat had one heck of a tough burden to bear.**

Though it's a bit of a misty memory now, we'd followed up by doing some blood tests on Freya. It showed she was positive for Bartonella, the bane of my existence. She probably got it from being born outdoors and being exposed to fleas. We began treating her for that when I started to notice she seemed to be holding her head at a weird angle.

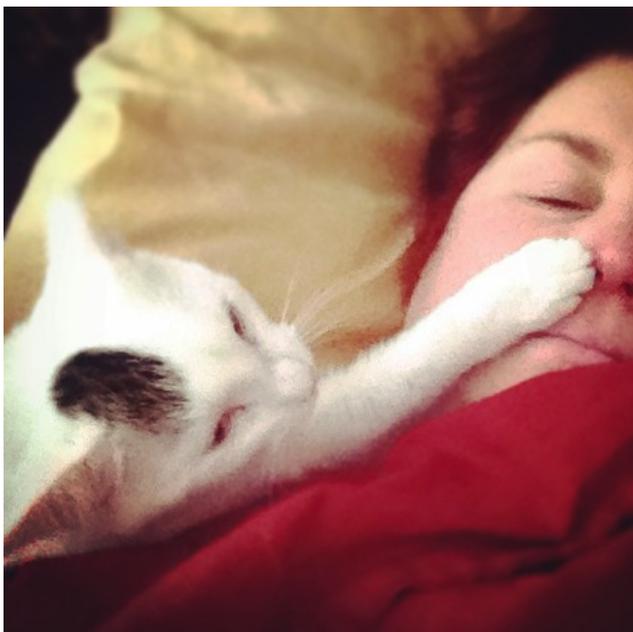


©2015 Robin AF Olson. My lopsided foster kitten.

Freya's head was tilted over on the same side as her wonky eye. Back to the Vet again and that resulted in finding out she had a very serious ear infection (*from what??!!*). Did that cause the eye problem/nerve inflammation? Did she have a physical deformity with her inner ear that caused her to retain fluid, which then got infected, causing the head tilt? Had the ear infection begun first, causing the Horner's syndrome, but we only discovered the ear infection when it was serious enough to cause the head-tilt?

Was it from the vaccination? The Bartonella? A physical deformity?

All I knew was that after being on antibiotics for 3 weeks for bartonella, we had to put Freya on another, stronger antibiotic to treat the ear infection. **This one could BLIND her in a higher dose and I was scared shitless about putting her on it for six WEEKS.** I kept pushing back about how long she had to be on the medications. I wondered what this stuff would do to her digestion since antibiotics are notorious for causing diarrhea. We had to put her on Baytril because it can penetrate bone and that's likely where the infection was; inside the tiny bones of her inner ear.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Freya is still Freya, wonky eye, head tilt and all.

I have no idea how many vet visits we did because now I had waxing and waning numbers of ALL our foster and “owned” cats getting sick, too. (see [THIS](#) ^[3] post for that story).

So I focused on giving Freya Baytril, hoping to see her lovely blue eye again, hoping she could run without her head hanging to the side. **It's ironic that I was okay with her being incontinent, but thinking I'd never see her sparkling blue, silly crossed-eyes again broke my heart.**

It took the full six weeks before Freya began to act more like herself. One day I realized I could see her eye again and the next her head seemed straighter. Dr. Mary continued to check her ear and report she was seeing less and less debris and infection. We discussed doing a CT scan and possible surgery on Freya to drain the area so we did a fundraiser to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

Between the Horner's syndrome, head-tilt, Bartonella, then being hit by at least two URIs and a stomach virus it was only as recently as FRIDAY of last week when Dr. Mary felt like Freya was almost out of the woods. That was four MONTHS after something set off a firestorm of health woes.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Life is good.

Freya sneezes and coughs once in awhile so she could still have a polyp in her right ear (*based on the sneezing that doesn't seem to be a URI*), but her inner ear looks normal now. The coughing could be a heart defect or parasites that I didn't de-worm her for yet (*she's been de-wormed many times but needs a different de-wormer for the next round*). **Freya's still tiny, weighing in at just over 5.5 lbs at almost nine months of age. In comparison, her brother, Pascal is almost 9 lbs. She's still not 100%, but getting there.**

Then when it seemed Freya couldn't get anything else, she went into "heat." **Yes, Freya was "lookin' for luv" and it was clear, due to all the yeowling, screaming, rubbing on every one and every thing she could get near that our little girl was becoming an adult.** I haven't been around an intact kitten...ever. I'd had to repeatedly put off Freya's spay due to her chronic illnesses and I felt terrible she was suffering yet again. Clearly time was up. It HAD to be done.

Today was the day.

Part 17 airs next where we find discover that things are about to change whether we're ready for them to or not.

Here's a lineup of all our stories about Freya in chronological order from the beginning:

[For Freya's Sake](#) ^[4]

[Dear Freya](#) ^[5]

[For Freya. Part 1 of 2](#) ^[6]

[For Freya. Part 2 of 2.](#) ^[7]

[For Freya. Bonus Part 3.](#) ^[8]

[Please. For Freya.](#) ^[9]

[The Unexpected Turn. For Freya. Part 6.](#) ^[10]

[Antics of a 12-Week Old Kitten](#) ^[11]

[On the Eve of the Birth of Freya 2.0](#) ^[11]

[Freya 20. Neither Snow, Nor Rain, Nor Gloom of Night.](#) ^[12]

[Freya 2.0. In Search of Peace.](#) ^[13]

[Freya 2.0. 12 Little Words.](#) ^[14]

[Freya 2.0. 12 Little Words. Part 2.](#) ^[14]

[Freya 2.0. The End and the New Beginning.](#) ^[15]

[Freya 2.0. The Price and the Curse of the Pink Underpants.](#) ^[16]

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Comments

Thu, 2015-05-14 13:33 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: FREYA ^[29]

OMC. Never a dull moment. But she's looking so good! *PRAYERS* and love!

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Links

[1] <http://www.healthypetcoach.com/>

- [2] <http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=1+2124&aid=2477>
- [3] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/let-it-ride>
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