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## Stand By Your Man.

Mon, 2011-10-24 14:59 — Robin Olson

*When what ails your cat isn't clearly defined, it's easy to lean on your Vet and assume they know all the answers. They can decide what should be done next-that's their job, right? What I'd like to suggest is you don't let them call the shots-ever-without being your cat's biggest advocate. You know your cat better than anyone else how your cat behaves-how well they eat-if they are using the litter pan and their output is normal or not. Your Vet has MANY other patients to deal with, a life to live, other distractions. It doesn't mean they don't know what they're doing, but it does mean that they don't have the time to spend endless hours on your cat's case, alone. When it comes to your cat's health care, you must be prepared to push back, ask questions and offer reminders and suggestions to your Vet to help him/her solve the case.*

The longer I do cat rescue and experience health issues with fosters as well as my own cats, the more I realize that it helps my Vet if I understand the pieces to my cat's health "puzzle" as much as I can. Overlook something and that might be the one thing that ties everything together. I may not understand cat's physiology the way my Vet does, but I can provide anecdotal information and I can be the one to remember my cat's health history when my Vet might miss something while reviewing my cat's file.

Before we visited Dr Weisman this morning, I made a list of every question I had, plus I thought about Nicky's past health issues. Dr. Weisman didn't have a complete picture of Nicky's life and it was up to us to provide that to her because whatever is ailing Nicky is not blatantly obvious.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Waiting for Dr. Weisman to arrive.

**It made me think of a few suggestions to share about going to the Vet. Maybe some of them will help you when you have to bring your cat to the Vet.**

- 1. Keep a folder of your cat's health records.** Sounds obvious, but if you have to look something up, it's there. If you want to compare blood work from one year to the next or can't remember if your cat was ever tested for Bartonella it's there. Yes, you can call your Vet and they should know, but what if your Vet is closed and you need to go to the Emergency Vet?
- 2. Do your best to understand and be able to recall every treatment and condition your cat has ever had.** If you have to make a cheat sheet of notes, do that. I seem to have a good memory for what each cat has been through, so I just sit quietly and think about it and jot down questions for my Vet based on the cat's past history and include the details of his or her past I think are important to underscore.
- 3. Don't let your Vet tell you what to do without clearly understanding the pros and cons of what is being done.** It's nice when they offer to give your cat a shot of Convenia so you don't have to give it pills, but is Convenia the RIGHT antibiotic for your cat? Should your cat even GET an antibiotic? What about other medications other treatments? Understanding is so important. In the heat of the moment, some times you don't have the luxury of looking up what side effects or dangers are in a certain medication, but if you do have time, then LOOK IT UP. Be smart. Ask a lot of questions. **Make sure your Vet remembers those details about your cat that he or she may have missed.**
- 4. Take time to think about what is best.** IF YOU CAN. There are many situations where time is a luxury you do not have.

There are other situations where if you take a day or week to repeat a test or see how the cat does, it's perfectly acceptable. *Sometimes rushing into a treatment or surgery makes it worse or makes the case more complex. Try not to do too much at once or you won't be able to understand what changes were the ones that made the difference.*

What happened with Nicky today is a very good illustration of the points, above. **Sam and I were expecting that Nicky would be having exploratory surgery today.** He has too many test results that show some sort of problem-and we needed to know what was going on.

We had our list and because we had spent time thinking about it, we **were able to give Dr. Weisman more information about Nicky that ended up being crucial to his care, today.**

**Nicky has a growth on his spleen-it is likely it is benign.** Older cats can get these growths, but the ultrasound Vet didn't describe the growth well enough so we know if it is a tumor. Cats don't need their spleen as they get older so if it had to be removed, Nicky would be fine.

**Although Nicky's blood work does show early signs of renal disease, what Dr. W didn't know was that Nicky is in DIRE need of a DENTAL!!! Some how that information was not passed on from our Vet to Dr. Weisman.** Nicky has a [cervical line lesion](#) <sup>[1]</sup> on at least one tooth and some mild tartar that needs to be cleaned. That, alone, could be the cause for Nicky's kidney issues and that his mesenteric lymph nodes are swollen, but that wasn't the possible smoking gun.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. *I DO NOT CARE TO BE IN THE CAR! WAHHHHH!*

Before we knew any better and **Nicky was being fed GRAIN (in his dry and canned food), Nicky's urethra would get blocked up. Eventually we spent many thousands of dollars having surgery done on Nicky to remove his penis (which can be referred to as a PU surgery) so he'd have a bigger opening to urinate through and not block up any more.** Right after that we learned about diet and got him off grain. The surgery was done years ago, but once we mentioned it to Dr. W. she perked up. That one thing could be what is causing some of Nicky's symptoms and that his immune system is constantly being taxed from having that larger opening.

She also felt that possibly Nicky was having a reaction to being fed a raw diet. Sam and I aren't sold on that, but we're open to the idea that if Nicky's immune system is weaker from his bad teeth and the PU surgery, that perhaps the mild bacteria he might encounter on his food just adds to his problems.

**We also showed Dr. W. Nora's blood work.** She's Nicky's sister and she has no kidney issues whatsoever. Of course this is not comparing the same cats, exactly, **but between Nora and Gracie's recent blood work there are no signs the diet is hurting them-rather helping if anything.**

**It became clear that doing anything other than a dental on Nicky wasn't necessary today.** Nicky doesn't show enough clinical signs to tell us he's in crisis. None of his tests are so bad that we MUST do surgery NOW. **We decided that after the dental and dose of antibiotics and some time to recover from both, that we'd re-do the ultrasound and see if anything has improved.** It's possible many of these issues will lessen in severity OR get WORSE. If so, we move forward with surgery.

We're giving it a month. **Right after Thanksgiving we'll re-test and see how he's doing.** If he starts to show clinical signs before then, he has the surgery done sooner. It's really not a case of not going it at all, it's a case of when it's done. **Sooner or later we will be facing this procedure, but today is not that day.**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. My boys last night.

**Nicky is on an IV for the next few hours to protect his kidneys before surgery, then they do the dental..and they remove and biopsy a growth I found on his leg while we were IN THE CAR, on the way to the VET!** After that, Nicky goes back on the IV and tomorrow morning, with any luck, we'll bring him home.

I can't say we lucked out, but I think I can say we feel better about this choice. **Nicky may still have cancer or renal disease or both or hyperthyroid or IBD...we just don't know yet. Maybe we caught it VERY EARLY or maybe not. We'll find out in time.**

**And all this happened because we saw Nicky peeing on the floor in the kitchen...**

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## **Comments**

Mon, 2011-10-24 16:06 — Binky, Scooter,... (not verified)

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

Well glad things worked out like the did. Maybe after the dental, things might clear up. We are all hoping for that. Love the picture of Sam and Nicky. He is such a handsome man. Thanks also for the information that could be helpful at the Vet. It will come in very handy

Mon, 2011-10-24 16:51 — [Sally \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

### **Nicky** <sup>[17]</sup>

Ya gotta be part cat lover, part detective, part puzzle-solver. It was good that you didn't jump to conclusions and have the surgery done.

Love the photo of him and Sam--they have the same expressions.

Tue, 2011-10-25 13:53 — [Shelli](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

### **Oh my, I love that picture of** <sup>[19]</sup>

Oh my, I love that picture of Sam and Nicky!

Sending love your way, dear.

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#### Links

- [1] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feline\\_odontoclastic\\_resorptive\\_lesion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feline_odontoclastic_resorptive_lesion)
- [2] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>
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