

EPILEPSY OR NOT?

I will try and explain what I mean in a concise way, but it is not very easy. In 2008 I went to Finland with Pixie. When we were there, she ate grass and vomited and was generally miserable. Not the whole time, but on and off. We were there for three days. When we came home I took her to the vet for a check-up. All the test results were good.

She had had a litter in 2007. In the spring of 2009 she had a seizure, and then another one during the summer. This time we photographed the seizure. After the first seizure I contacted the vet and we came to the conclusion that she had a sensitive stomach (maybe a touch of dyspepsia). Pixie has always been very close to me, and when I feel unwell or stressed out, so does she.

After the second seizure I showed the photos to the vet. What was happening? The vet was very clear: this was NOT epilepsy even if it might look like it. It was her stomach once again. Pixie had a litter in the autumn of 2009 and was very well during this period.

But then she had a few more seizures during the spring of 2010. Did I dare have her mated her again? I finally did, and after that litter I felt that she never recovered fully. The seizures occurred more often. She has always been a fuzzy eater, and I have tried to find a food that she likes. Now she would only eat at night, but even then she did not seem to like the food. And she started to have seizures almost every week, sometimes several times per week, and occasionally even twice a day. She was so skinny... In the mornings she ate grass and vomited, and occasionally she threw up her food.

I decided to have her spayed, in case the troubles were hormonal. Four days after the operation she had another seizure, and this time it wouldn't stop. The earlier seizures had lasted 2-10 minutes, but this one lasted about 2 hours. I called the vet who told me to come there at once. This time we went to the regional animal hospital Strömsholm. When we came there the seizure was receding and the veterinary said that this was NOT epilepsy. But WHAT was it?

I went home and started to search the Internet. At long last I found the site www.cecs.se. Please go there and read the information, look at the pictures and the videos. I did, and they were exactly what I had observed with Pixie. I bought the RC food that they recommended and my dog is now a "new" dog.

I called my vet and told her about my findings, and she agreed with me that it all added up. Because this is a syndrome, you can't test for it, take samples or in any other way find out what it is; you have to use trial and error.

Today, Pixie ONLY EVER eats the special RC food and an occasional slice of cucumber or a piece of carrot. She has had two seizures since I started giving her the special food on the 18th of July. Both seizures have lasted about one minute, and they have not been very serious.

The difference at feeding time is amazing; nowadays she just can't wait to have her breakfast or dinner. She has gained weight and is in a very good condition.

Why didn't we think that she had epilepsy? Well, first of all she had full eye contact with me during the seizures, and she could wave her tail when I talked to her. She also had full control of her bowels. It didn't add up at all. And yet she had such serious seizures...

I am very happy that I didn't give up, but continued to search for an answer. I am also very grateful to my vet who listened to me and believed me. What if she had said that it was epilepsy?

As of today, none of Pixie's progeny have been afflicted as far as I know, and for this I am very grateful.

Please visit the web page www.cecs.se, read the information and look at the pictures and the videos - there may be other dogs out there who are afflicted. I have heard that there are Labrador retrievers that are afflicted, and probably other breeds also.

You might wonder why I am being so open about this; I could just as well have pretended that nothing out of the way had happened. But I hope that by telling you Pixie's story I may help save the lives of other dogs that would otherwise have been diagnosed as epileptic. Instead of being put down because the epilepsy medicine doesn't work, they can get the right kind of food and live long, happy and healthy lives.