

Mica's Story A Belgian Tervuren

A perfectly healthy and lovely Belgian Tervuren dog named Mica was lost to Immune-Mediated Hemolytic Anemia (IMHA) in less than a week after being stricken with this illness.



IMHA occurs when the immune system attacks its' own red blood cells (RBCs) prematurely and at a much faster rate than new ones can be produced. It can be life threatening and requires prompt, aggressive treatment once diagnosed. The lack of oxygen-carrying RBCs may damage vital organs. There is a high risk of death from blood clots because of damage to RBCs. It may be caused by exposure to toxins, infection, cancer, or be idiopathic (no known cause) like Mica's, which is most often the case.

Symptoms of IMHA can appear suddenly or more gradually. Mica's onset was sudden, in about 24 hours. Her energy level was down a bit one day, but otherwise she seemed well. After midnight she vomited once. By morning her breathing was labored and she was very weak. Later that day in the hospital she became severely jaundiced. Your pet may exhibit subtle weakness or lethargy. They may have an increase in heart and respiration rates and have pale gums or ears. Your pet may vomit or stop eating.

Treatment is intended to restore RBCs and stop their ongoing destruction. Mica's anemia became so severe that she needed critical life-support that included the help of other dogs.

You may not know that dogs give blood, just like humans. If they didn't, there wouldn't be enough blood to provide the hundreds of transfusions Portland-area dogs need every year. As with humans, blood must be readily available or a patient may die. That's why DoveLewis' Canine Blood Bank is so important.

Mica's condition improved after the transfusions. She had more strength and fought valiantly-for nearly a week when complications of IMHA took her from us.

Please consider talking with your vet about involving your dog in a blood donation program. Blood transfusions like Mica received greatly increase a dog's chance of recovering from IMHA and other illnesses or injuries.

IMHA is a devastating disease, yet it's the most common blood immune disorder in dogs and cats. At times it can be managed, but today there is no cure. More research is desperately needed.

To learn more about IMHA, please visit:

http://home.comcast.net/~joan.ogg/aiha_info.htm

http://www.marvistavet.com/html/body_imha.html

<http://www.peppypaws.com/LillisLegacy.html>

To learn more about DoveLewis' Canine Blood Bank:

Contact Carole Bedford, Blood Bank Coordinator at

971.255.5920 or bloodbank@dovelewis.org

And visit: www.dovelewis.org

Mica was a highly intelligent, fiercely loyal companion with a keen sense of humor. She had a winning smile and a willingness to give. She was a real inspiration and a joy to know and love.

In memory of Mica-the wonderpup

10 May 1997-18 August 2006



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