

ASK THE VET

Shane Morrison, Christchurch Veterinary Referrals

Gastroenteritis following surgery and
anti inflammatory medication



SUFFOLK

magazine

I have a nine-year-old fox red labrador, Rufus, who has been on daily anti-inflammatory medication for the past three years to treat terrible hip arthritis. My vet diagnosed this with X-rays and started medication straight away. Rufus improved within just a few days of this medication starting. However, this hasn't been smooth sailing and he has had bouts of gastroenteritis forcing us to stop his medication temporarily before starting something new. We are on a third medication now and I am worried about what this might be doing to his body in the long-term. Do you have any thoughts on an alternative treatment?

I am sorry to hear that Rufus hasn't coped very well with his arthritis medication. Most of the drugs that we use to treat the signs associated with arthritis in dogs are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drugs. Ibuprofen is an example of a NSAID, although this is unsafe to use on dogs. All NSAID drugs suffer to varying degrees with side-effects which usually affect the

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gastrointestinal tract, such as gastritis, gastric ulceration and diarrhoea. In rare circumstances perforation of the stomach wall or bowel may occur with life-threatening consequences.

NSAID drugs are usually broken down in the liver before the metabolites are discharged from the body via the liver or kidneys. It is therefore important that with the long-term use of a NSAID, that periodic blood tests are taken (roughly every six months) to confirm normal liver and kidney function. Their prolonged use can occasionally impair the function of either or both organs.

That being said, and in answer to your question, a better treatment for Rufus would be total hip replacement. By replacing both of Rufus' hips, his terrible hip arthritis would be inherently resolved and he would therefore not require any long-term medication. We are actually only one of very few centres in the UK that regularly undertake total hip replacements in animals. Non-cemented prostheses are now used, so that natural bone grows into the prostheses to secure

them, meaning that they are at very low risk of loosening over time and usually once they have set they comfortably last the lifetime of the patient, regardless of age.

Given Rufus' issues with medication, I would therefore recommend that he have hip replacements. Please feel free to contact us so that we can give you more information on the procedure.

**Do you have a
question you
would like to put
to Shane?**

Feel free to send us
message via our website
or LinkedIn page

christchurchvetsreferrals.vet

