

PIPESTONE *Veterinary Clinic*

Your Dog Is Vomiting, What Should You Do?

It isn't always "garbage in AND garbage out." Sometimes the foreign substances a pet ingests stay in the digestive system and cause real health threats.

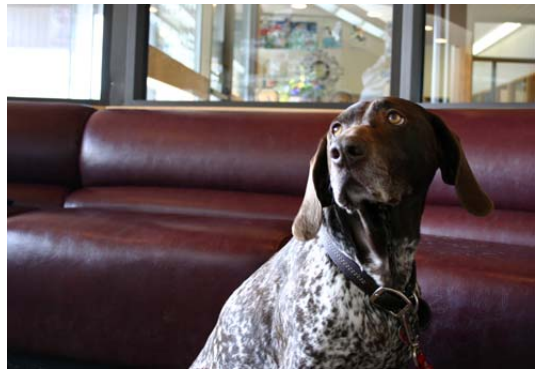
On February 7, 2010, Penny, a German shorthaired pointer owned by Aaron Lass of Pipestone, decided to eat from the garbage. The next day her owner brought Penny to Pipestone Vet Clinic because her vomiting was acute—every hour or two.

Eight-year-old Penny isn't the sort of dog to regularly eat what she shouldn't. Dr. Nicole Weber of Pipestone Clinic says, "A dog of any age can suddenly ingest a foreign item. Penny's owner was wise to realize vomiting signaled a problem that needed to be addressed quickly."

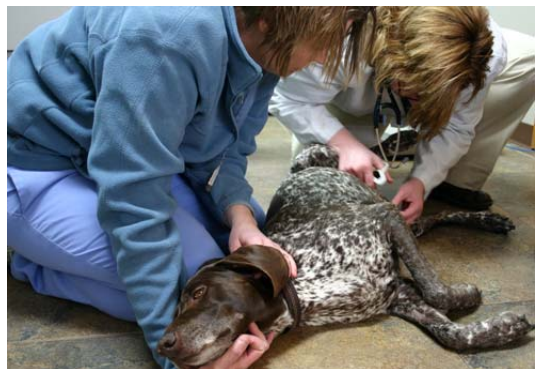
When Dr. Weber examined Penny, she pinpointed abdominal pain and recommended blood work and radiographs—both of which the Clinic is equipped to complete onsite. Penny's family agreed to tests.

Blood work suggested possible pancreatitis and X-rays showed a distended stomach. Dr. Weber then advised a barium X-ray to follow the course of a liquid through the stomach and intestines. X-rays taken at 30, 60, and 120 minutes after the barium was administered confirmed a blockage.

Penny's owner authorized exploratory surgery to remove whatever was threatening her health. Dr. Weber then extracted a mass of hay, straw, cotton fibers, and some unidentifiable items from her stomach. Dr. Weber also discovered a less prominent mass of similar material in her small intestines.



Penny, after her surgery



Katie Wiess and Dr. Weber remove Penny's stitches



This X-ray shows the blockage in Penny's digestive system.

Throughout surgery, IV fluids sustained Penny; after surgery she also received antibiotics and pain medications through her IV catheter. She stayed at the Clinic for two nights under Dr. Weber's watchful eye. "At 10 p.m. the night after the surgery she was bright and alert so we took a short leash-walk outdoors."

By noon of the third day, Penny went home with pain medication, stomach protectants, and strict orders to eat only small amounts of very bland food (Science Diet i/d). She returned to the Clinic for evaluation the following day and again a week later to have her staples removed.

"Penny was lucky her owners acted quickly," Dr. Weber explains. "She didn't experience any the life-threatening consequences of ingesting foreign substances. In unattended cases, dogs can suffer dying intestines or holes in the intestines that allow bacteria to leak through and into the bloodstream. Death is a real possibility."

All is well for Penny, though, who is happily at home with her "little brother," Trenton Lass (age 1), and four other dogs. "We're expecting another baby in July 2010," says Aaron Lass, "Someone else to tug at Penny's ears!"

Aaron reports Penny likes pheasant hunting, car rides, and playing fetch—so long as the other Lass dogs aren't included in the game. She wasn't crazy about her restricted diet, taking medicine, or spending the night away from her family. After her brush with a serious health issue, she took advantage of her chance for more naps up on the furniture.