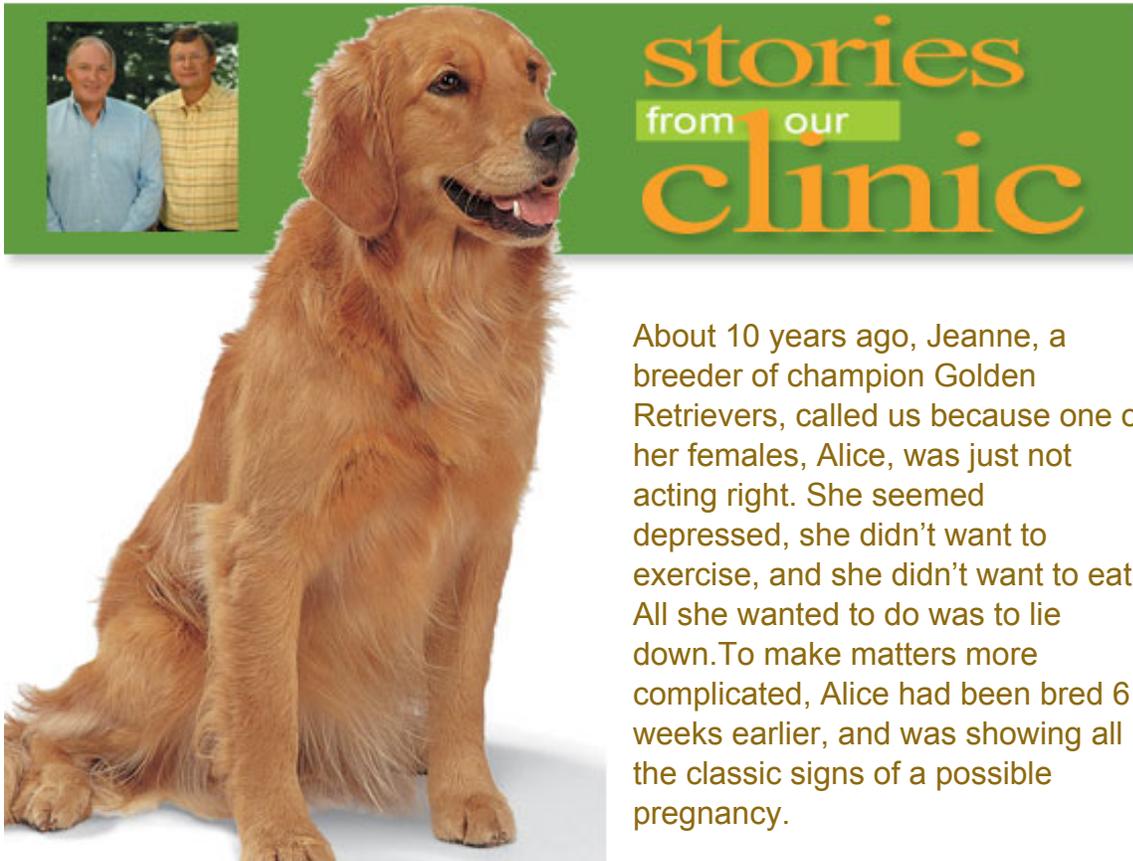


Stories From Our Clinic: A Case of Ehrlichiosis

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About 10 years ago, Jeanne, a breeder of champion Golden Retrievers, called us because one of her females, Alice, was just not acting right. She seemed depressed, she didn't want to exercise, and she didn't want to eat. All she wanted to do was to lie down. To make matters more complicated, Alice had been bred 6 weeks earlier, and was showing all the classic signs of a possible pregnancy.

We told Jeanne to bring Alice in that afternoon. Alice did indeed appear under the weather and she just wanted to lie down all the time. We took an oral history from the owner and got our first clue as to what might be wrong with the dog: it seemed that Alice had been out in the woods two weeks earlier, and had come back covered with ticks. Jeanne had picked off all of the ticks she saw, but wasn't too concerned since she hadn't found any tiny deer ticks, the ones that transmit Lyme disease.

We took Alice's temperature, which was slightly elevated, and examined her. We also performed a specific blood test because of the history of tick exposure. We suspected Alice contracted a disease called Ehrlichiosis, which is transmitted by infected Brown Dog Ticks, Lone Star Ticks, or American Dog Ticks. Ehrlichiosis is caused by a microbe that infects certain blood cells and can result in anemia, and if left untreated, more serious conditions. Ehrlichiosis can be found wherever there are infected ticks, which is in all 50 states.

The results of the blood test showed that Alice did have Ehrlichiosis, but now we had a dilemma: the treatment for this disease includes powerful antibiotics that would harm unborn puppies. The owner agreed to have an ultrasound done and, fortunately, this showed that she was not pregnant and must have been experiencing a false pregnancy.

We were able to treat the disease with the antibiotics, and Alice was symptom free after a few weeks. Alice went on to have several healthy litters before she was retired to enjoy her golden years sleeping on a bed by her owner's chair.

Although Alice's story turned out well, we stressed the importance of getting Alice, and all of Jeanne's dogs, on a good tick and flea prevention program. We advised that Jeanne use tick control products such as [Bio Spot® ACTIVE CARE SPOT ON® for Dogs](#) or [K9 Advantix® II](#) and to keep on removing any ticks that might get through the preventive barrier.

