Stories From Our Clinic: The Rottweilier with a Swollen Leg

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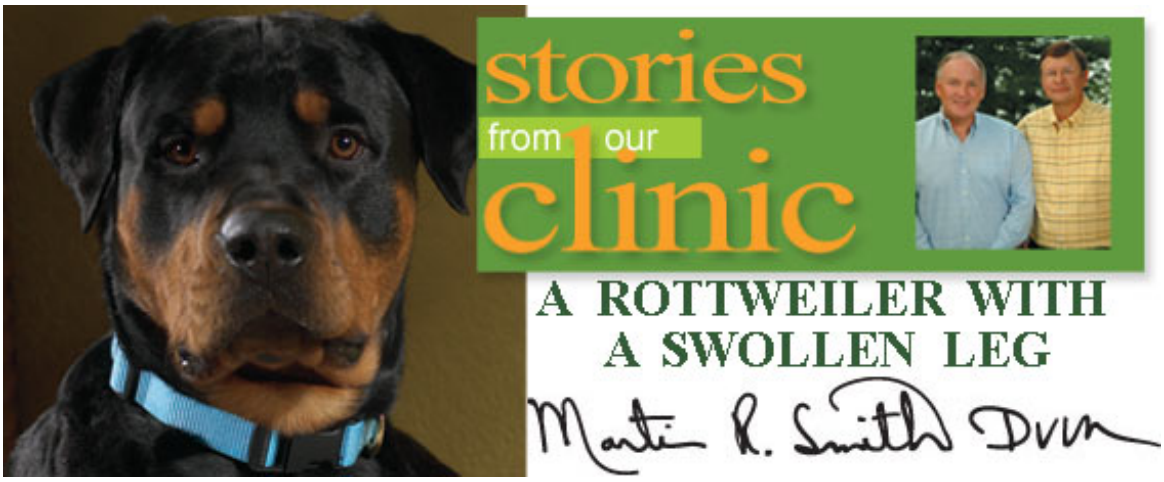

Roscoe was a big Rottweiler and one of the nicest dogs we had known. He was 11 and had no major problems since a knee injury when he was two. We fixed that and always looked forward to seeing him. One morning, Roscoe's owner, Francesca, called and said the night before, Roscoe had been lying next to her on the couch, and one of his front paws was tucked under her leg. When she reached down to stroke his leg, she noticed that it felt different than normal. She got up and looked and realized that the carpal, or wrist joint was swollen. She put some ice on the swelling right away.

We saw Roscoe the next day and the swelling had not gone down. In fact, it had gotten worse and he was running a fever. Francesca said looking back, Roscoe had been lethargic and not eating well the past couple of days. Our first thought was Lyme Disease, which is carried by the deer tick. We have a lot of deer and, consequently, a lot of deer ticks up here in northern Wisconsin, and see Lyme Disease quite often in dogs.

We did a simple blood test, which tests for antibodies to 4 diseases: Heartworm, Lyme disease, and two other tick-born diseases: Ehrlichiosis, caused by *Ehrlichia canis*, and Anaplasmosis, caused by *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. Roscoe tested positive for Anaplasmosis.

Anaplasma phagocytophilum (formerly *Ehrlichia phagocytophila*) is an emerging tick disease transmitted by the same tick that spreads Lyme disease. The symptoms of the two diseases are similar, as well as the treatment: an antibiotic called Doxycycline, given daily. So we sent Roscoe home with a prescription and asked Francesca to call us with questions and keep us updated on Roscoe's condition.

The Doxycycline did its job and the swelling went down to normal within a week. Roscoe lived to the ripe old age of 14 without any further complications from this disease.

For an overview on this medication, visit the Spotlight on Vibramycin (Doxycycline).

For full details on this medication, download the free patient information sheet.

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