

Cases From Our Clinic: Embedded Collar

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It was a winter day like any other. Cool breeze blowing through the pines, snowmobiling tourists buzzing down the road, pet owners bringing their pets in for various reasons both routine and emergency. Then the receptionist called us to come up and look at a dog that was brought in by an animal-loving tourist from the Chicago suburbs, Henry. He had found what looked to us to be an 8-month-old Rottweiler pup wandering out in the woods where he was snowmobiling. The dog was very hungry, but coughed up the food it took willingly from Henry's hands. It took him two days of coercion and offerings of snacks before the pup would come to him to be touched and another day before he was comfortable enough for Henry to pet him.

While petting him, Henry noticed a silvery flash and the Rott's neck appeared to be misshapen. When he tried to check it out further, the dog looked frightened and uncomfortable, so he ceased and decided to bring the dog into us for examination.

Buddy, which is what we decided to call the adolescent, was full of kisses when we sat down to examine him. We took a close look at his neck and found what we had suspected - a chain collar, which was put on him when he was younger, was still on him, and as he grew, the skin and other connective tissue of his neck grew around it. The collar was deeply embedded in his neck. We knew we would have to move fast because of the discomfort this was causing Buddy, so we scheduled him for surgery that afternoon. We successfully removed the embedded collar over a long surgery. We put a dressing on it and bandaged his hind feet so that he would not scratch at the deep wound. We had him in the hospital for a total of 3 days, changing the dressing daily. Faithfully, Henry came in and visited Buddy every day earning more and more of the dog's trust. Henry was willing to extend his stay in the Northwoods so he could remain with Buddy and decided to bring him back to the Chicago suburbs with him as a house pet. It took a long time, over 6 weeks for the wound to heal, but it finally did.

We hear about Buddy from Henry every year and have even seen him on occasion when Henry visits the area. After some gentle but firm training, Buddy became the model dog and even became a therapy dog. The only scar he has is one on his neck that his fur covers nicely. His emotional scars seemed to have healed with the affection that Henry lavishes on him. We feel that Buddy has the best home he possibly could have. And he has never had to wear a chain collar again.

Important facts about chain collars

- Do not leave on all the time. Great for use as a training aid if owner is properly instructed. Take off when training

time is over.

- Always check collar for fit. You should be able to fit two fingers under it comfortably as well as comfortably being able to slip the collar over the dog's head.
- Use the collar correctly for the most effective training.