

# Pyometra and Sersi



**Photo far left is normal uterus. Photos on right were Sersi's uterus**

I was asked to share my recent experience with Pyometra. I'm not someone that would consider myself an expert on dogs. I'm humble enough to know that what I don't know is more important than what I do know about the Stafford. I would consider myself someone who truly just loves the Staffordshire Bull Terrier. I'm relatively new to the breed, 5.5 years. My hope is that by sharing Sersi's story, it may help someone else recognize Pyo and help save their bitch.

It's Thursday 5:30am.

We woke up like we always do. Gizmo plops from the bed onto the floor with Sersi soon to follow, because BREAKFAST! Everything is right in the world. Gizmo has finally gotten his marbles back since that hormonal bliss otherwise known as a heat cycle left Sersi's body almost 3 weeks ago.

Everything is routine for us. It's for their benefit really. You know, so I don't forget to feed them or take them outside. I've never thought about the other benefits until now.

First we go outside. Because nobody should be forced to eat with a full bladder. Gizmo is always ready to go and romping through the house at 5:30 am and Sersi is usually just out to do the essentials and quickly back in because... food. This morning

she seems a little tired but it could be because she has Gizmo for a son and I'm sure that's tiring in itself. As I'm preparing their morning meal everything is normal. They both sit there waiting for me to finish whatever it is that is taking so long to prepare so they can eat.

At about 7:30 am we go outside again before I go to work. This usually takes much longer because this is the part of the morning Sersi patrols the yard perimeter and takes a poo. She also likes to make sure the squirrels stay in line and none of those dangerous big eared hoppy things make it into the yard. However this morning is a little different. She leaves the perimeter check on dangerous rodent patrol to Gizmo who usually spends this period chewing logs and bones while sniffing out bitches. She urinates not far from the door and comes back inside and walks back to her crate like she's ready to go back to bed. Not normal for her to leave such important duties for the boy to complete.

I've been working a lot. So maybe me being gone so much is getting to her. She just seems so less than excited about the current routine. I pull her collar out of the drawer and she perks right up ready to go. Happy girl gets to go to work with me today! We buckle up and head out. Pretty non eventful day overall. She got to say hi to a couple people through

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the window of the van but nothing crazy because we like to practice good social distancing during these times.

We arrive back home around 6pm. I lift her out of the van because it's a bit of a leap. Set her on the ground and she urinates and heads for the door. The second step up into the house was a bit of a challenge for her for some reason. There are 3 or 4 steps up and she missed the second one. If I wasn't paying attention I might have missed it because she quickly recovered and walked right into the house and back to her Kennel. This is what first got my attention. Sersi doesn't usually miss a step. I've only seen it happen a couple of times. Usually it happens when she's running or going too fast. She was walking.

We usually eat when I get home so the second most important part of the day happens and everyone gets fed. Maybe her energy is down. So I'm suddenly wondering if I'm not feeding enough so I give Sersi a Gizmo sized portion. Sersi is normally quick to finish hers and waits for Gizmo to finish his. At one point she has to stop eating for a moment before she can continue. She wanted to eat, she just had to stop for a moment. This is unusual. Sersi doesn't come up for air when she eats. Then, she jumps on the bed but almost doesn't make it. This is starting to become worrisome. Something is wrong. Hopefully it will pass. Hopefully not in the form of Diarrhea.

The rest of the evening she just lays in her crate and goes outside when she wants. Sersi requires a personal escort to go outside. So, I always seem to notice when she Poos. This is something that she hasn't done all day. It's something that doesn't happen the rest of the night. She just pees and sleeps. She played Bitey face with Gizmo a little bit but pretty much just rested the evening away. The

end of the night we go to bed and she almost doesn't jump high enough to make it on the bed. But she makes it.

It's 2am Friday morning. I get up to use the restroom and since I gotta go I figure dogs do too. So like a jerk I wake everyone up and we go outside. Sersi goes outside and urinates by the door and returns to come up the steps back inside but hesitates to come through the doggy door. I try and encourage her to come through the door but when she lifts her front leg to step through she can't do it! She's not able to reach through the doggy door. I open the door and she is able to make it up the steps. She walks into the house down the hall and into the crate beside the bed. This isn't normal. She usually jumps back on the bed and back into her spot. I call her out the crate and tell her to get on the bed and she can't. She wants to but she can't. I lift her on the bed.

This is where the alarm bells start to go off. I have a dog that is otherwise completely fine. She's just a little mopey and unable to perform any movements that require leaping or reaching. I lift her on the bed and she curls up to go to sleep next to me. But her eyes remain open while I'm searching google for Pyometra symptoms. As I'm doing this she quietly breathes and sometimes slightly groans when lifting her head to look back at me. This could also be because she's elected not to poo for the past 24 hours.

She's not showing any other symptoms other than being just slightly off and now limited movement. Oh... and she doesn't seem to want to poo. It really could be anything at this point. She had also been drinking more water lately and even urinated on the floor before I got home a few days before. I just thought that maybe she was forced to hold it for too long. Again. I've been working long hours. That being said Sersi doesn't urinate inside.

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She's a water holding trooper!

So I had excessive drinking and urinating and a depressed bitch that couldn't perform normal Stafford movements and felt no desire to defecate. I have no puss coming from the vulva. She's not vomiting and doesn't seem to have a fever. No nasty smell or anything abnormal other than she just looks a little off. She perks up for treats and has an appetite. I wanted to overlook this as maybe just something she ate. But the past 24 hours had made it impossible to overlook the fact she needed to be seen by a vet. She's progressively gotten worse in a short period of time.

After arriving at the clinic later that morning, the vet tech meets us outside. Sersi perks right up and starts wagging her tail to meet a new friend. She tries to jump out of the crate but I catch her and set her on the ground. I shake my head as she happily walks away with her new friend. Tail wagging and all as they walk into the office. I reassure the vet tech that this is not normal behavior for Sersi. Normally she is off the charts excited. Not just happy to be here. Keep in mind. I go to this vet because they listen and are thorough.

She's not running a temperature. They perform an X-ray and see clearly that she is full of poo. But not much else. She's loving this attention she's getting. I was told she wagged her tail quite often during the exam. They do an ultrasound and see what might be a slight bit of fluid in the uterus that might be infection. They run blood work to check white blood cell count and see there might be signs of infection somewhere in the body so they follow up with a smear and decide that it's most likely closed pyo. The decision is quickly made to perform an emergency spay.

After surgery the vet called to let me know it was in fact a closed Pyometra! The uterus should normally be the width of a pencil. Sersi's was the size of a hot dog filled completely full of puss and infection! Luckily it hadn't ruptured or started leaking. I feel so blessed that I was able to catch it so quickly.

It could have been so easy to say give her a day and see if she feels better, then take her to the vet. I could have just thought she's just got a slight injury of some sort but she will recover. But that extra time could have cost Sersi her life while I was working those long hours. I could have waited to place the vet appointment. I could have come home to a dead Stafford.

I guess all I can say is that if you feel something might be a little off with your dog. It might be more off than you think.

David Nelson

