

# PRAETORIAN BULLDOGS

## PYOMETRA The Choices ?



This is a day to day account of what happened when I discovered that my bitch Amber had Pyometra. I am writing it as it might help someone else in the same position who knows as little as I do as I am a novice and only own two Bullies, Monty my Dog and Amber my Bitch.

My husband and I had been away for the weekend returning Sunday, my daughter Sarah had been looking after the Bullies and had commented that Amber was sulking because we had left her. All bully owners know how a Bulldog can make you feel guilty just going out.

On Monday Amber was still quiet but as I had to go to work I did not see anything really wrong. Tuesday, she was still a bit reluctant to go for a walk or eat and was very lethargic. Tuesday night I was getting worried, she was drinking a lot there was no discharge, and I thought she might have cystitis I put paper on the floor at night to see if there was any blood in the urine. She had only just finished her 2nd Season about 4 to 5 days ago.

Wednesday morning I noticed she was a lot worse, still no discharge nor any blood in urine. I checked her tummy and it was very hard and distended when I ran my hand gently down from her ribs to her groin it felt very swollen, a few minutes later I noticed a discharge from her vulva. I was straight on the phone to the Vets and said I suspected Pyometra and was coming down straight away. There was still no smell or a large amount coming away.

I saw the Vet, and he said he thought it was Pyometra but would Scan to check how badly swollen the Uterus was, Amber was put on a drip, scanned and a vaginal swab taken, and if it was Pyometra that they usually Speyed. She was Toxic from absorbing the poison into her system. I mentioned an injection that I knew of that had been used and he said he had used it once but they failed to clear up the infection and had to Spey in the end.

The results of the Scan showed a very swollen Uterus, and my Vet phoned at 1 o'clock to say that he was concerned with the size of the Uterus, and was going to consult the Royal Veterinary Collage and contact a Specialist to give details of Ambers condition and whether it would be safe to start the Injections with her Uterus that size. The Fax he received back said that there was a chance it would work as long as her fluids were kept up that it was up to me to make a decision, there was risks, he explained that one way or another the pus had to be removed either surgical or medically. The medical way was the injection, but the risk was that it could cause a very violent reaction causing bad stomach cramps and the risk that the Uterus burst, and of course it would cause sickness. The surgical way to Spey, a risk with the anaesthetic and operation (being a Bulldog), and the infection would still have to be treated with antibiotics.

It was a very hard decision, Amber was only 18 months, it was only her second season and I wanted to breed her if I could. But first and foremost her health came first and I talked it over with my Vet and I decided I would like to try medical way. The understanding I had with my Vet was, One Injection would be given, and a close watch on her, any bad reaction i.e; violent stomach cramps, and he was going to spey immediately.

Amber was on a Drip all day Wednesday and Wednesday night and was receiving antibiotics.

A Cannula was placed in her leg (a permanent Needle for a short period of time) to avoid finding a vein with a needle every day and was a lot less stress on Amber. She made no attempt to remove the bandage holding this in place.

Thursday Medical treatment was started, the first Injection was given about 10 o'clock.

I phoned at 1 o'clock and was told that although she had been sick 3 or 4 times straight after the injection she was stable and O.K. So they were going to continue with the 2nd Injection at 5 o'clock, she was sick again, but was stable and coping well.

There was as yet no discharge. They said we could bring her home at 8 o'clock as she would be happier at home for the night and we could watch her. She ate a little chicken and drank a little water with Lactade in it. We had her in the front room and we stayed up with her all night. By about 9 o'clock the discharge started, and it poured out of her, she slept while I cleaned up her rear end all night, using wads of Kleenex towel we used up 2 rolls and filled a carrier bag, I was changing her about every 20 mins, and boy did it smell !! Not for the squeamish.

At all times she had no temperature and her colour was good.

Friday Took her back in the Vets for her next two injections and they placed her back on the drip. My Vet also gave her an anti-sickness drug to help relieve the symptoms.

She was sick only once in the morning and not sick at all when given the evening injection. The discharge was a lot less, and we brought her home at 7.30. She ate well Hearts and Liver first about 8, then two chicken legs about 9.30 and drank. My Vet had said to get her to eat as much as I could at night to give her strength and make her feel better. Only had to change her about once every two to three hours a lot better.

Saturday Gave her some scrambled eggs, so it was a bit lighter on her tum before she went back to the Vets.

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(On a lighter note, before I took her back to the Vets I put her out for a wee, she grumbled and groaned about going out, but I walked her to the lawn she walked very slow and very lethargic. Then she saw the pigeons we have on the lawn, well she flew round the lawn chasing them, stretched her self and I am sure she smiled. Then she came back down the lawn to the gate, saw us watching her and slowed down and bent her head as if to say well I am still poorly really.)

The Injections on Saturday were repeated, again only sick in the morning. No drip needed (Cannula now removed) as the loss was little and she was drinking and eating O.K. Back home for the night.

Sunday Back for the Injections, still only sick the once in the morning, Abdomen not distended and a lot better hardly any discharge. Eat well and drank.

Monday Back for Injections, today she is going to have another Scan to determine how her Uterus has gone down. The discharge is minimal and is becoming clear. This is her 5th day of treatment.

My Vet phoned to say that they had done another Scan, and one Horn had gone down and the other had only a small pocket about the size of a thumb nail by the bladder. He said he was very pleased with her and had every hope that the last injections would reduce this fluid. The swab test was not as yet back and he hoped it would be back on Tuesday. He said he would like to give her one more Injection Tuesday morning. Brought her home Monday evening. Discharge clear, and very little.

## Tuesday

Back to the Vets, One Injection given. Phoned and spoke to my Vet, the Swab Test was backed and showed that the right drugs were being given. He felt that there was no need to continue any further injections but a close eye must be kept on her. I went to get her and she was given a weeks supply of antibiotics and I was to take her back if anything untoward happened. But to make an appointment for the following Monday.

## One Week Later

Amber's Check Up. The discharge had got a little colour but the Vet assured me that this was to be expected as like after whelping the Uterus had to go down in size and some discharge would be white cells, but to keep a check that it never became a heavy discharge or very dark. By now as you can imagine I have become quite paranoid with her rear end. The check ups will continue for a few weeks and antibiotics. And we all hope that all continues to go well !!!

10 days is the usual treatment if the discharge continues. Or until discharge becomes clear. Amber had a clear discharge after her 6th day so did not continue with injections.

My knowledge is little only what I have experienced myself and from what I have been told.

How I knew about the Injections was from Roy and Steph Fox, who used it successfully on Amber's Grandmother, Tymaro Clementine who went on to have two litters of pups.

From what I understand this treatment has been available for about 5 years, and has proved successful in a few cases. The reason some Vets do not either use it very often or not at all is explained by the fact that if you have no wish to breed from the bitch then to spey is the answer. And as in some areas there are Vets who have very small number of Breeders on there books the option is not always used. It is used on a bitch to bring her back to being able, with luck, to being able to produce pups. After treatment, Mating at her next season is recommended by a proven stud dog. Antibiotics are sometimes advised over the mating period.

The first half an hour the injection is given is very unpleasant for the bitch and is quite a lot to put her through, although with careful treatment by a trusted Vet who will ensure that every thing is done to relieve the symptoms i.e; Drip, to stop dehydration, anti sickness drug to either stop or reduce reaction. And very strong antibiotics to fight infection.

The swab is taken of the discharge to determine the bacteria like flu it can be many different ones, and diagnosis of the germ helps determine which drugs would be most effective. There are as I understand two bacteria which are resilient to drugs and there are only about two drugs that kill this type of germ. Hopefully, the germ that is shown is one that can be treated with antibiotics.

The treatment can upset the bitch's Hormones and the date of her next season can alter.

No one wants their dog to suffer, and you must know your own dogs strength and capabilities. If it had been my other dog Monty (although a dog) I would have decided to go for the spey as I know that Monty would not have coped with the treatment. So the risk of the anaesthetic would have been the lesser risk in his case.

The Name of the medical treatment is

### **LUTALYSE INJECTION**

**(Dinoprost Tromethamine) 0.5mg/ml - had 0.625ml**

**The ANTIBIOTICS used were:**

**TRIBRISSEN 24% Injection - Had 3.5ml.**

**(Sulphadiazine & Trimethoprim)**

**Or the option to Spey**

**As with all our animals the choice in the end is yours !**

## **AMBER REVISITED**

This is a follow-up on Ambers progress after she had the treatment for Pyometra. LUTALYSE INJECTION (Dinoprost Tromethamine).

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After the treatment And Follow—up antibiotics were finished, Amber continued to do very well and was soon very fit and healthy. Jumping and running and eating everything.

I had decided to mate her at her next season, as recommended by my Vet. I expected the treatment to upset her normal time to come into season, and was expecting this about August as I thought the treatment would make her late. But as we all know who have Bulldogs they never cease to amaze us. She came in to season about two months early ! Well so much For booking shows early, and thinking I wouldn't book any for August on. I am sure that the reason she came into Season so early, was due to the fact that she was so fit after the treatment and had no other side affects.

Well the next thing was to choose a Stud dog, (Husband), now although I have a 1 dog of my own, he has never been proven and as advised a Proven Stud dog should he used to avoid a miss mating which could have it own problems. Now as you remember I am a novice myself and know very little about the pros and cons of choosing a Stud. So I looked through many of the Bulldog Incorporated Books to jog my memory of the dogs I had seen and liked. (Which was nearly all!!) So after eliminated some that were to far away to travel etc: The choice was made, and I phoned to ask and confirm the owners were agreeable.

Now I wanted to be as sure as possible when she was ready to be mated and was ovulating To enable me to be as exact as possible I contacted my Vet to take her on her 8th day to have a blood test done with Premate. This was to be continued every two days until she was in Oestrus which showed her ready.

Down to the Vets on Day 8, then home to wait for the telephone call to say Yes or No. The answer today was No. So it was back on the 10th Day, another No. answer. Now as I was told most, but not all, Bulldogs are ready on the 12th day and her Grandmother and Mother were, the 12th Days test was finger biting. Steph who had come to give me moral support and company sat with me all morning waiting for the test results, and then the phone call came, we had lift off, time to go, car and packed cases at the ready.

We arrived at the Home of her future Husband in a couple of hours, very excited and as for me wondering how on earth things would go. We were made to feel very welcome and after a cup of tea and a chat I began to relax. With everybody's help and of course the stud, AMBER had her first mating. We were to repeat the mating on her 14th day, to make double sure that she had taken.

Steph and I went off to find a Hotel for the couple of nights, this ended in a grand tour of Birmingham, the NEC, and few Motorways, but that's another story. After a hour and a half we found a nice hotel 10 minutes away from where we started !! (we had a great weekend, can recommend the Hotel).

Back on Monday for her 14th day, the mating went even

better this time as Amber was not so frightened. We left for home feeling happy that all had so far gone well. Now the long wait until we could be sure She had become pregnant.

I tried to relax for the first few weeks, it was very, very hard. As you can imagine I was worried in case any thing developed that could start off the Pyometra again, as it is now proven that this is caused by hormone in the Uterus. Well after about two weeks she showed a slight discharge, I was frantic, but after a few phone calls to friends was told that this is perfectly normal and was usually a good sign! it was only the once and very little, with no colour or smell.

Another two weeks, it was now 4 weeks since mating, time to go to the Vets for a Scan. I had noticed she had got a little fatter, but then it had been rather hot for long walks and it could be wishful thinking.

In we went, Amber had her tummy shaved, then the big moment, there on the screen we counted four pups, perhaps more. It was so exciting, I was so happy, the Vet said that all he would confirm was that she was pregnant, well Pregnant was good enough for me. He gave me two scan pictures to keep, and like any proud Mum, I showed them to everybody, the Milkman was not over impressed ! Still now 5 more weeks.

Due to Amber having had Pyometra, it was decided that Amber have a caesarean. This is another subject which seems to have a lot of people with different views. As a new comer to the Bulldog I am not sure, and at the moment have taken my Vets advice for the benefit of Amber. The only worry that I have about this is I'm sure most breeders worry about is that She just comes out of the anaesthetic O.K. I have been assured that with the new anaesthetic and a quick recover there should be no problems.

Well Amber has eaten me out of house and home, but of course only if its Chicken, light scrambled eggs, my toast and breakfast and any other unsuspecting visitor that thinks he can get away with eating his meal in peace. And no I don't shut my Dogs out, I tell my friends if you come to my house, you better like dogs.

Dave, my Husband, has built a 4ft x 4th Whelping Box with a escape bar, this will go in one of the Bedrooms along with all the stuff collected, Cotton Wool, Baby's Bottles, Col-late Lifeline, Lactate, Microwave Hot Water Bottle, Alarm Clock, You name it its most likely in my Bedroom.

A friend came round to see me and asked how long she had to go, I said quite happily only 3 weeks now, what, she said I thought she had got ages yet. She was referring to my Daughter Sarah who is 6 months Pregnant as well, I wouldn't say that I was one tracked but well, it is Amber's first litter, and Sarah's second! You must agree you must get your priorities right.

Ambers quite big now, and her teats are very swollen and full of what is the puppy's first meal colostrum she is getting

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a bit uncomfortable and when you look at her you get that Bulldog Look, you know the one where they make you feel so guilty. Well I suppose she didn't ask to have puppies, it was once again my decision. I suppose all owners who breed there dog at some time wonder if they have made the right decision if there bitch will be all right. I have moved into the Bedroom with the Whelping Box in it, and have Amber in there with me, supposedly to get used to the Box. Why then is there this lump that snores in Bed with me? Well at least she is comfortable.

I have as it says in the Book, taken her temperature a few times to get used to what her normal temperature is. A drop in her normal temperature is supposed to give you warning of the first stage in Whelping. Some one once again forgot to tell Amber, so far the five times I have taken her temperature it has been 37.7, 36.7, 36.8, and 34.6, well your guess is as good as mine. I expect like her Mother, she will give birth to a pup on the way to the Vets, who incidentally was her, makes you wonder doesn't it. After a few days I did get the hang of taken her temperature and it was normal 37.5 to 38.

Also, I understand you must try to keep them quite and relaxed well who every said Bulldogs were lethargic have never had an Amber. Pregnant or not if the doorbell rings over my settee she jumps and I mean over, perhaps I should put her in Agility not the Show Ring. She will quieten down when she's bigger, so every one tells me. Only two weeks to go.

The puppies will spend there first two weeks in a box with a Hot Water Bottle, and I will put them to there mum every two hours. This seems to be the best solution that every one I have spoken to does, to avoid accidents of the pups being squashed. Although I have heard that some Mums don't let you get away with taken there puppies away. That must be even more work watching 24 hours a day. Steph is coming to stay a few days and help show me what I have to do.

At last the day arrives that we go to the Vets. It is now her 63 day and she is showing No Signs of the 1st stages, her temperature is normal and she is not panting or straining. The Vet takes the decision not to operate today as he thinks she could go to Monday or even longer. Today is Friday. My Vet and as I understand from speaking to other Breeders, wants Amber to start to go into 1st stage labour before he operates. Amber at the moment is looking very healthy and fit and when we went to take her to the vets thought we were going for a walk.

Amber seemed to get a little stressed and we put it down to the car ride to the Vets plus she was probable uncomfortable.

When we got home Amber was panting but still *seemed* O.K. She was very restless all night and by 4 o'clock Saturday morning I was becoming concerned. At all times her temperature was normal and until she started pushing it

was not obvious that she was in labour. by 7 o'clock she was having strong contractions and there was a baby pup in the canal, we waited to see if the pup would be born, one leg was out and later a head hut there seemed to be a piece of skin over the pups shoulder between the head and the leg trapping the puppy's exit. I phoned the vet to say we were on our way, the pup was stuck but rather than try to mess around with her we got her in the car and got to the vets.

(I now believe that this was caused by what is called a Suture of skin, where the hymen is not completely broken in a Maiden Bitch, and just to enable others to ensure that it does not happen to them I suggest that when you take your bitch to be mated if possible someone who knows checks for this, or perhaps you can ask a Vet to check at some time after mating)

When we arrived at the Vets we explained to him what had occurred, he was then called on the phone and went to deal with this. By now I was sure the pup was not going to make it out on its own and was very concerned about Amber. So I went down on the floor and looked at how I could help, I then pushed the pups leg hack up into Amber and held what seemed to be a smaller hole on the left side of her Vagina I held this closed enabling the head to come down and the next time Amber pushed the Pup was born. There was no life and resuscitation was tried on the pup and oxygen given and the vet administered an injection called "Respirot" to the pups to encourage the brain to start the lungs breathing. While we tried to revive the pup as Steph looked round at Amber, to our surprise there was another pup on the floor again no life, we tried for a very long time to get the pups to breath but I feel that they had been trying to be born for too long and with much heartache we gave up.

I did not want Amber to try to whelp the others naturally and I was concerned for her and worried about if she had done any damage to herself inside. The Vet checked to see that no more pups were in the birth canal and we decided to go for Caesarean.

Steph and I sat outside in the Car for what seemed like days not hours. But it was about 1½ hours before we were told that 3 more pups had been born and they were trying to revive them. I find it very hard to write about all the small events that happened and things were not going right. One of the pups kept gasping, but the breaths were very far apart and never became viable.

All the pups were full term, had long nails were **all** even in size and were very beautiful. I had to go home leaving 4 little heartaches behind. And it makes me cry as I write this.

The litter was 3 boys and 2 girls, colour all Red and White.

We spoke to the Vet before we left, and he was very pleased with Amber, her horns were fine no problems inside, and she had recovered well. She actually walked out to the car.

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Amber had a very bad throat from the tube and cough for 4 days I have been advised by another breeder to ask the Vet to use a tube the size they would use for a Cat in future, she was on antibiotics "Synulox" which is normal after a Caesarean and Beneline for the throat.

The anesthetic used was "Propofol" and she was maintained on "Iso Flurane" as technology advances so does the use of anaesthetics, the one used enables a very quick recover and as soon as the operation is over they come round which is proving a lot safer in the recover of the bitch.

Amber was O.K. and we came home with one pup a little boy. It was very sad but at least I had Amber still and she had one little pup to mother.

On Monday I took Amber back to the Vets for a check up, this time it was my Vet and not the emergency one. He said all was well and her scar was fine, and the discharge was quite clear and would dry up in a few days. She would go back in 10 days to have her stitches out.

I asked my Vet about what had happened, he said that often the pups brain does not inform the lungs to breath either because they are born to early or there is something wrong. He still said he like many Vets preferred a Bitch to start the 1st Stages of Labour before a caesarean is done, but in Ambers case now that they had a history of how she did not show 1st stage labour and we only new she was in whelp by the sign of a puppy being horn, would probably do a selective caesarean working out when her known date to whelp would be, plus I would now have the knowledge to spot any signs of 1st stages of labour more quickly. But still stressed that this was not always a sure way to get all pups out alive, and even in other breeds he had known the whole litter to die. Its a very difficult decision. If Amber had never had Pyometra, I could have let her self whelp. I have spoken to people who have let there bitch whelp, which they have then only had part of the litter only to have to caesarean later to either remove a dead pup or have not known exactly how many pups where due and then had the Bitch spayed because of the infection caused by the dead pup left in the Uterus. I do not know enough to say which way is best, with better anaesthetics the risk might be less to the Bitch now than what it was, and if we could safely whelp and know for sure that the Uterus was clear of all pups and no damage shown to the horns, I have heard that there are better Scans that are now available which show more, it is once again up to the owner to know her bitch and your Vet to be Bulldog friendly and have at least some sort of History, to make the decision together, what is the safest option for Mother and Pups.

The conclusion is, that the Pyometra did not in any way stop her from breeding or cause any damage to her horns. She could had things gone well with the first pup probable self whelped What happened I put down to experience," if only," being the biggest words in the dictionary. I know all Bulldog Breeders must have some time experienced similar tragedies it was my first litter and I have learned some

valuable lessons.

Bulldogs, we know the problems, but Oh what a Lovely Breed, and breed again I will because, I LOVE THEM.

P.S. - Amber is an excellent mother, Pups name, "Berty" doing well with all 9 teats to choose from

Please Note:

This article was written quite a few years ago, and at the time the Medical Treatment was correct as stated. Treatment could have changed with the advancement of drugs - always consult a vet.

Sue Bush  
PRAETORIAN BULLDOGS