

My Dog Ate What?! UNBELIEVABLE BUT TRUE

By: Kate Lawrence
www.gcv.com

Veterinarians see a lot of interesting — and crazy — things. As board-certified specialists, the surgeons in the Surgery & Orthopedics department at Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists (GCVS) have the opportunity to evaluate and treat some of the most complex and unique cases out there — especially when it comes to what our pets try to eat. I recently spoke with the soft tissue surgeons at GCVS to hear about some of the craziest cases they had treated, and found out that pets really do eat the darndest things!

In case number one, the owners of a sweet Standard Poodle puppy couldn't figure out why she was swallowing constantly, seemed nauseous, and wouldn't eat. She was brought in as an emergency to see Dr. Suzanne Hunter, one of the soft tissue surgeons at GCVS, for evaluation of a possible GDV (gastric dilation volvulus), which is a critical situation. After the initial evaluation, one of the technicians felt a lump on the patient's neck as she was petting her. It turned out the puppy had swallowed an entire cat "fishing" toy! The toy was stuck from her neck all the way through her body, as you can see in the x-ray image. Thankfully, with some careful manipulation under anesthesia, Dr. Hunter was able to remove the toy in its entirety without surgery.

One of the other soft tissue surgeons, Dr.

Heidi Hottinger, relayed a story that is nothing short of miraculous. She was presented with a patient who was referred for eating... wait for it — a chef's knife! You'd think the knife would have caused serious trauma to the patient going down, but when Dr. Hottinger made her approach during surgery, shockingly the knife hadn't done any significant damage. The tricky part was going to be moving it without severely cutting the patient in the process, so Dr. Hottinger decided to repurpose some rubber tubing. She made a slit in one side of the tubing and slowly eased it over the sharp edge



of the knife as she gently removed it an inch at a time from the patient. Talk about steady hands!

Dr. Caleb Hudson is a GCVS surgeon who performs both soft tissue and orthopedic surgery. In his case, the patient had been evaluated several times through the

years by a general practice veterinarian for intermittent bouts of vomiting. The owners eventually got a referral to see Dr. Hudson, who discovered what appeared to be a foreign substance in the patient's stomach. Dr. Hudson performed surgery, and moved a HUGE amount of... vinyl flooring! The flooring had apparently been in the stomach for quite a while, as the owners reported that they hadn't lived in the house with that type of flooring for several years.

Our final story is from Dr. Jason Balara, another GCVS surgeon who performs both soft tissue and orthopedic surgery. His

patient also presented for evaluation of a possible foreign body. In Dr. Balara's case, however, there wasn't any vinyl flooring in the stomach — just a huge Teletubbie! The purple one, of course. It was a large stuffed toy, so it was fortunate that the patient was a giant breed — a Mastiff. Unfortunately the Teletubbie was not able to be reunited with its owner after spending some time in a digestive tract, but happily the Mastiff did well after surgery and was able to be reunited with his family.

It's clear that our pets really do eat some funny — and dangerous — things. Thankfully, the surgeons at GCVS have pretty much seen it all, so when you have an "uh oh!" moment with your pet, you know they'll be in good hands. To learn more about our hospital and board-certified surgeons, visit our website at www.gcv.com.