

We got Winston in April of 2005. He came from a breeder recommended by the foremost breeder of pugs in the US for the last 40 years. We picked him up and thought he was perfect. I had done a lot of research into pugs and knew of their issues. The eye problems, the breathing problems, luxating patella's, PDE, the need to control weight, trachea issues. CM/SM never showed up in all my research.

All went well as a puppy, for the most part. He had a case of demodex that took a while to clear up, but a lot of puppies have that. He had no other problems, or so we thought. As he got a little older (around the age of 2 years) we noticed that he would limp when he woke up from a nap or when he came out of his crate after being crated for the night. Took him to the vet, no answers. Then I noticed that his nails were wearing down unevenly, with the inner 2 nails wearing down more than the outer nails on all 4 feet. As the years progressed, the uneven wearing down got worse, so much so that the black pigment on his inner nails was worn off and the tops of his nails would bleed. He even got a lesion on the top of his one foot that would never clear up. He was dragging his feet. I took him back to the vet and she thought it might just be laziness in walking and recommended that I tape his feet while walking. I tried that, he just scraped the tape off while walking. Back to the vet again after he was limping more and more and dragging his feet more and more. In May of 2009, he had some basic neurological testing done, the foot turning under to see how fast the feet came back up into proper position, he didn't do well. The younger vet of the practice then went to the oldest vet in the practice to have him do the same tests. Winston still didn't do well, but they thought he might have some kind of inflammation, so the vet gave me a NASID for him to take for 10 days. He took them, and seemed to improve a bit, which in hindsight was an improvement, since he wasn't hurting. After finishing off the NASID, he got worse again and we were back at the vet at the end of May. This time he just outright failed the neuro tests.

The vet gave me a referral to the neurologist and on June 3, 2009, we went. Winston had to be fasted for this, since we were sure he was going to have an MRI. After giving the neuro Winston's history, the neuro examined Winston and noted that he was holding his neck a bit stiffly. He then went on to say it could be a few things, CM and/or SM among them. We went off to have the MRI and when it was over, as I was holding Winston as he came out of the sedation, the neuro called and told me Winston had hydrocephalus, CM and SM, with the SM being pretty severe. He did not recommend surgery.

The next few months were spent in a whirl of medication, changes to the medications, acupuncture appointments, despair and worry about my baby. I was always waiting for the other shoe to drop. It seemed like every time Winston improved a bit, he had a relapse. For a while he could go up the house stairs, but now he can't. Every once in a while, he just can't go down them either. He can go down and most of the time up the deck steps. He stumbles a lot while circling for a good potty spot. I carry him a lot. He's had to give up walking outside on the sidewalk since he drags his feet and would scrape those nails again. That's torture for him since he's such a sociable dog. Just recently I've gotten him a doggie stroller. I just wish the weather would cooperate so that I can use it. (It's been beastly hot and humid here and pugs don't go out in either one)

Since January of 2010 we've settled on a medication schedule that seems to be working, for now. Winston takes 2.5 mg of prednisone every other day and a previcox every day at dinner time. On the days he doesn't take the prednisone, he has 2 previcoxes. He doesn't seem to be in much pain anymore.

Winston never really had the typical SM symptoms. He didn't air scratch, he didn't shake his head, he didn't and still doesn't yelp. He does scratch when he has his harness on and when it comes off, but that's all he does these days.

Winston is a wonder in that he doesn't realize that he's different. He is the way he's always been. He just wants to love and be loved and it doesn't matter that he can't stay on his feet at times and that our house has rugs everywhere so he won't slip. He's our boy and we love him.

Hope this helps a bit, Cathy

Copyright2010 friends-of-lola.com