

# Health

## *A Frustrating Spay and Allergies*

*(Part 1 of 3 parts)*

**By: Raven Gombar**

**C**ould spaying a dog with allergies cause a problem? Yes, and in one descriptive word- the whole situation can be very frustrating! After all, spaying is supposed to be a routine and simple procedure, not complicated. But that's exactly what I was faced with when I spayed my Vizsla, Brandy this past summer. A little background, she was born late 2003 and remained intact until the summer of 2007. She was fed a raw diet from puppy hood until mid 2006, after which I made the switch to dry kibble (due to time and commitment constraints, although I am still a supporter of the raw diet).

This is our story, and perhaps some of you have experienced something similar, and are willing to share some insight.

**O**nce Brandy turned two years old I thought she had developed demodex, but after skin tests and medication my veterinarian determined that it was not demodectic mange. She continued her itching all year long, developed an infection from all the scratching and was put on antibiotics by my veterinarian. Nothing changed, and so I sought the help of a naturopathic doctor. The naturopath treated Brandy with a myriad of natural medicines, powders, liquids and sprays. There was little improvement, and certainly no significant change to make me want to continue on with the treatments. So, back we went to our veterinarian who suggested an elimination diet...with a brand carried by the clinic. I grumbled, and pointed out it could possibly be done with raw food too, but the veterinarian suggested I just try this 'special' allergy diet with limited ingredients to see if there would be an improvement. This was suggested because it

was not seasonal itching, it was all year round. Well, we gave it a try and nothing changed. She itched and itched and itched more. I tried various other brands of natural dry kibble claiming to be for sensitive skin, or allergy issues, even brands other Vizsla owners had success with. Nope. Still no improvement at all. So at the beginning of 2006, I begged my veterinarian to prescribe Brandy with something to ease her itching until I could find a permanent solution. And so on a very low dose of Prednisone she went and has been on it ever since. The next suggestion she said for me to consider was allergy blood tests. I said I would certainly consider doing this when the right time presented itself.

**N**ow, this brings us to the latest part of our story. I had moved to a new town, and switched to a different veterinarian. Brandy was scheduled for her spay in the middle of August 2007, the next day our new veterinarian called and said Brandy was doing fine. She came home and was her normal wiggle bum-self. She wore her Elizabethan head cone collar around with no fuss, so I knew she was not pestering her internal, dissolvable stitches. But, the next thing I knew a few days later she developed very red and purple irritation around her suture and worst of all it had opened a little bit at the bottom (the suture was about 1 inch in length).

Panicking, I rushed her in the following morning where our new veterinarian informed me that Brandy's body was having a reaction to the internal dissolvable stitches and was rejecting them! Sigh. I was told to do a warm Epsom salt compress on the suture 3 times a day for 10 minutes until it healed. It started to look better a few days later...but the next thing I knew her suture had a huge blister over the top with another two blisters around the suture! And when they burst and opened the suture even more than it was before I got extremely upset, and made an appointment as early as I could.



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In the meantime, I had to patch up the wound with gauze and medical tape because it was oozing blood and fluid (another good reason for ALL Vizsla owners to have a first aid kit accessible at all times). Our regular new veterinarian was not in that day, so we saw the veterinarian who owned the clinic. He put Brandy on antibiotics right away to help with any infection that could occur, said to keep it clean and keep up with the Epsom salt compress. He then mentioned something to me...that due to Brandy being on Prednisone, it was halting the body from healing the suture, and it wasn't helping her situation either that her body was reacting to the dissolvable stitches! And, he also made note that from my comments of Brandy being an incredible wiggle-bum, having a hard time sitting still and, horsing around (like jumping on the chesterfield and bed) she was making it worse for herself.

This only meant one thing, Brandy would be shipped back to my old home where my father, Karlo Gombar could look after her all day, as he works from home now.

The veterinarian also gently reminded me that I should do a blood allergy test...I said I would

book her an appointment for that test right after Thanksgiving weekend when she would return with me. He also noted to me that many of today's so called "hypo-allergy" foods contained many ingredients that dogs were actually allergic too! Isn't that something! I knew of that possibility, and just found it funny how many veterinarians proudly claim miracles with these allergy specific brands of food, yet sell it still, knowing the dog could still be allergic to many of its ingredients.

The latest report as of the end of September is that the suture has finally closed. That was the best news received in a long time. And so the second part of my story will continue with the outcome of Brandy's blood allergy test, and the next steps I will be taking to resolve this battle. Look for the next 2 parts of our story in future issues of the Vizsla Canada Newsletter.

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Raven with Brandy