



What's Wrong With Buster?

Happy Holidays!

It's the holiday season, my favorite time of year! My family's yearly tradition is to go to my aunt and uncle's for a big family dinner. My aunt Rita makes the best holiday dinner in the world. My uncle Joey makes a killer apple pie. I can't wait!

My grandparents and cousins also join in on the celebrations. If the weather is just right, we all play a few games of flag football! Playing football is so much fun when I get to play with all of my cousins. Sometimes when my uncle isn't looking, my older cousin Josh slams me into the ground. I always pretend like it hurts so my uncle hollars at Josh! LOL. It's the best.

This year we played for what felt like hours. I was dead tired. I went into the house to get washed up before dinner. I couldn't wait to serve myself a big plate of Aunt Rita's cooking! I always want to eat the pie first, but I know my mom wouldn't let me. BOO!

After getting back from washing my hands, I sat in the den and watched the football game with my grandpa. He was sitting in his favorite chair with our family dog, Buster. I sat on the floor next to Buster, and he came to give me a big lick on my cheek. YUCK! But I enjoyed it anyway. Buster usually wags his tail, but this evening he seemed unusually tired with no energy.

Finally, Aunt Rita announced, "Dinner is ready!"

I couldn't wait to eat. We all headed over to the large dining table and dove in. It's funny how all the food tastes so much better after you've been outside playing for hours and hours!

After dinner, we ended up back in the den and began playing my favorite game, UNO, while watching the game.

"What's wrong with Buster?" Uncle Joey suddenly asked from the kitchen. "He hasn't eaten anything out of his bowl."

"That's weird," Aunt Rita said. "Buster always finishes his food."

About half an hour later, I heard Buster making crying sounds. He looked over at me as he stood near the door. He was asking me to go outside. His head hung low, and his body was limp.

"Buster what's wrong?" I asked. I opened the door and let him go outside.

Aunt Rita asked, "Can you please follow him and see what he does when he's outside?"

I shook my head and threw my shoes on. Buster usually runs down to the edge of the yard to use the bathroom, but that evening he was barely two steps off the porch before he went down to squat.



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For the next two hours Buster came in and out of the house. He had diarrhea. After a while, Uncle Joey took over bathroom duty. He looked concerned.

“There’s blood in Buster’s poop,” Uncle Joey said. “Maybe he ate something bad or got into our table scraps somehow?”

“Maybe, it could be possible,” said Aunt Rita.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Can you please go check the back pantry and check the trash can?” asked Aunt Rita.

I walked to the back pantry and found the trash can tipped over with food all over the floor! I ran back to the den.

“The trash is all over the floor!” I yelled.

“The turkey bones!” Aunt Rita exclaimed. “We need to take Buster to the vet right now!”

What’s Next?

If you were the veterinarian (vet) treating Buster, what would you do next? **Please fill out the form below.** Then read more to find out what Buster’s vet decided to do.

Name of the patient:

Type of animal:

Symptoms/Injuries:

Treatment Ideas:



Vet Notes:

Buster's History:

1. Buster did not eat at dinner time.
2. Buster's owner stated that he seems to have gotten into the garbage and may have eaten turkey bones.
3. Buster has been having diarrhea with blood.

Assessment:

1. Buster is lethargic (low energy). He is normally a very active dog.
2. Buster's gums are pink. They are not moist. This suggests Buster is dehydrated and needs water. The dehydration is probably due to his diarrhea. If he was feeling ill after getting into the trash, he would not have eaten or drank water.
3. Buster's belly was touched and felt for objects that may be stuck in his intestines or stomach. Nothing was felt at this time.
4. Buster's temperature is 101.6 degrees.*

**Dog Fact: A dog's normal temperature is 100-102.5 degrees. The normal temperature for humans is 98.6 degrees.*

Treatment Plan:

The vet told Uncle Joey and Aunt Rita to feed Buster a bland diet over the next week. They should feed him boiled chicken or lean (no fat) hamburger mixed with cooked, plain rice. If they wanted to buy Buster dog food instead, they should buy a bland, balanced prescription food from the veterinary hospital. The food needed to be easy for Buster's body to digest.

The vet also recommended giving Buster small portions of food and water at a time. If he ate too much at once, it would upset his stomach and he could vomit.

The vet also prescribed a medication to help clear the blood from Buster's stool (poop). If Buster still seemed to have blood in his stool after a day or so, the vet would do blood work. Pancreatitis, or an inflamed pancreas, is a common and serious condition for dogs that have eaten something they shouldn't. Pancreatitis can be tested through blood work, which could also rule out many other serious conditions.

The vet said X-rays may also be helpful if Buster's condition didn't improve or he got worse. X-rays would help the vet see if there was anything caught in Buster's stomach or intestines.





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The vet also suggested an intestinal parasite (small, microscopic bugs) screen. The screen would test Buster's stool for parasites that may be in his intestines. Parasites can also cause diarrhea.

Dog Fact: *There are more cases of gastrointestinal upset (stomach issues) reported in pets during the holiday season. This is because pets have more access than usual to food trimmings and treats.*

A Week after Buster's Vet Visit:

I called my Aunt and Uncle last night. They told me that Buster was back to being his old self! He wasn't happy with the bland diet, but he ate it anyway.

Next year, I will make sure to be extra careful with Buster and any other animals we have around the house. I want to make sure this never happens to any of our family pets again.