



ACCESS - CASE STUDY

“Plasma exchange has saved countless lives when other treatments have failed.”

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ACCESS RVT Sheridan Tidball comforting Nina.

THE SITUATION

Nina was a rambunctious German Shepherd in the prime of her life when her parents first noticed something was wrong. At first it was just a matter of Nina not wanting to go for hikes (the highlight of her day), but within a matter of days, Nina went from rolling around in the grass to being unable to stand or walk.

THE DIAGNOSIS

Nina was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis, a disease that causes the immune system to attack the muscles and nerves, resulting in profound weakness. Nina was not only unable to walk, but also unable to swallow. It took all of her energy just to breath. The diagnosis was made quickly and, when it was determined that she was not responding to conventional medications, she was referred to the Department of Internal Medicine / Nephrology & Dialysis for therapeutic plasma exchange.

THE TREATMENT

Therapeutic plasma exchange is a procedure that is performed with a specialized dialysis machine. Plasma, a component of the blood that contains disease causing antibodies, is removed and discarded. The diseased plasma is replaced with healthy plasma obtained from a donor. This procedure is only performed in a few veterinary hospitals in the world. Not only is therapeutic plasma exchange extremely effective for myasthenia gravis, it is also effective for other diseases involving the immune system, like immune mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA) and some rapidly progressive forms of kidney disease (glomerulonephritis).

THE RESULTS

Nina was administered 5 plasma exchange treatments. By the third treatment she was able to walk (and even run) around the hospital without any assistance. By the time the fifth treatment was completed, not even her doctors could tell she was sick! Nina is now home with her family, completely recovered from what would have otherwise been a deadly disease.

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