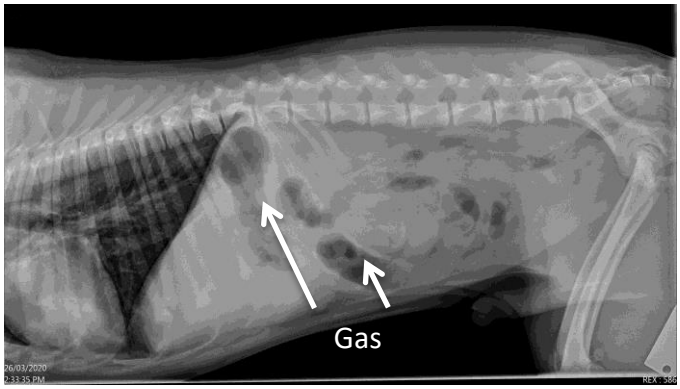
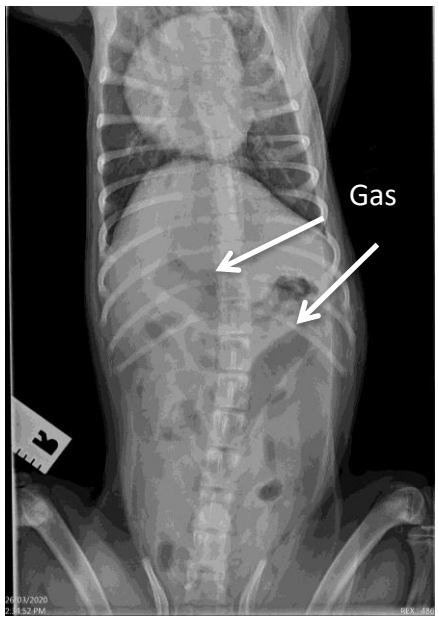
Otto's Ordeal

Even though we are spending more time with our pets in these abnormal times, they still manage to get themselves into trouble!

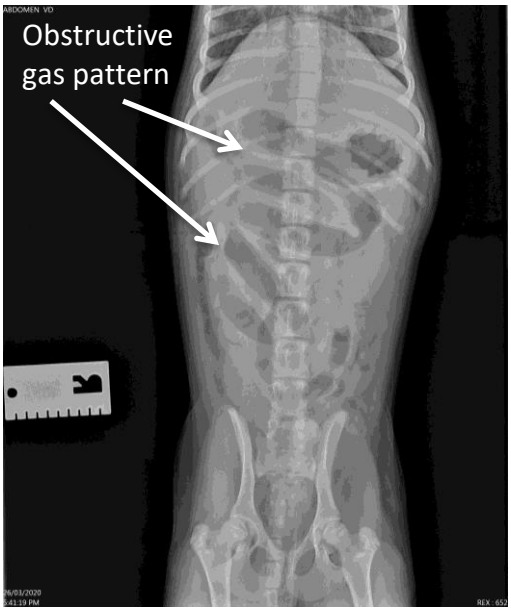
Otto, a cheeky little 6 month old Lagotto, found himself very unwell right at the beginning of our pandemic lockdowns. He had become increasingly dull since that morning and had vomited five to six times despite being given an anti-nausea injection by another vet clinic. When he arrived to us, he was very quiet but his physical exam did not yield anything spectacular. He had a normal heart rate, respiratory rate, no fever and was very comfortable in his abdomen; he even asked for tummy rubs! However, his continued vomiting despite having the anti-nausea medication concerned us, so we decided to investigate further.

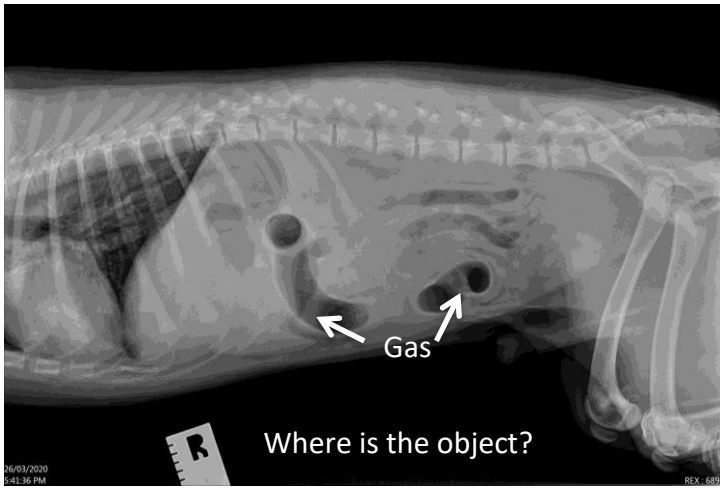
We took some x-rays of his abdomen whilst he was awake and found some gas in his stomach and jejunum (part of the small intestine). There was no obvious object or mass in his stomach or intestines, nor was there fluid obscuring the abdominal organs. These findings did not discourage us and we decided to put Otto on a drip to hydrate the gut and re-take the same x-rays for comparison two hours later.





What we found on the second set of x-rays was significantly different. Gas had moved further down the small intestines but appeared to be distending the bowel loops, as if something solid was preventing it from moving through. There was still no obvious object or mass that could be made out, but the evidence was too compelling. A young puppy with persistent vomiting and that specific gas pattern on x-rays could only mean one thing – an obstructive foreign body!





Otto was quickly prepared for surgery to find the offending object. He had a pre-anaesthetic blood test to ensure his organ function was adequate to undergo a general anaesthetic and he was sedated to allow us to use a lower, safer dose of anaesthetic drugs. As we searched along his intestines for the obstruction (did you know, the average sized dog has about five meters of bowel?), we finally found a hard, round item stuck towards the end of his small intestine. Otto had swallowed a nectarine seed!

This was promptly removed surgically and Otto spent the night recovering in hospital on a drip and strong pain relief.

The following day, Otto was much brighter and happy to go out for his wee walk with the nurses. On returning, he ate his breakfast readily and his tummy was comfortable on palpation. After a whirlwind 36 hours, Otto finally returned to his very worried parents that afternoon and had resumed his usual, naughty self by his 10 day recheck with us.

Here he is, two months on from his ordeal and fully recovered. What a handsome young man! Follow him on Instagram to keep up with his daily antics.

As we move back into some resemblance of normality, please remember to look out for your furry family members as they can get themselves into trouble very quickly. An increased number of walks throughout the day can mean more opportunities to scavenge and more people at home could result in fuller kitchen bins with very tempting morsels! If you feel your pet is not quite right and may have eaten something they should not have, please call us right away as early treatment leads to a faster recovery.

Keep well and stay safe,
Dr Karmen Fong