

CASE STUDY: "Polly" the brave little Kelpie



Early one Monday morning in June 2010, Polly the bouncy young Kelpie, and her mum Robyn were walking in Barge Park when Polly was distracted and ran across Maunu Road. Unfortunately there was a car coming and she was run right over at quite a high speed. Robyn and some helpful, worried onlookers rushed Polly quickly to the Maunu Branch of the Mill Road Vet Clinic, across the road. Vet Julie gave Polly a good check-over and realised quickly that she had several injuries and needed a full assessment at the Mill Road Hospital. She gave Polly a dose of strong painkillers and Polly was transferred to Mill Road immediately.

Vet Michelle assessed Polly when she first arrived at Mill Road. Polly was very pale, and already had a decreased temperature, indicating that she was in shock. She was unable to stand, and was very painful in her hindlimbs. She was also having difficulty breathing, and had decreased breath sounds on the right side of her chest. She had a small amount

of blood in her mouth, and several wounds on her head and hindlimbs. Polly was admitted to the hospital under intensive care. She was placed on IV fluids to treat the shock, wrapped in blankets and hotwater bottles, and was given further pain relief and antibiotics. Polly then underwent a series of x-rays on her chest, back, pelvis and hindlimbs to try and ascertain how serious her injuries were.

Chest x-rays showed that Polly had contusions (bruising) and haemorrhage in the cranial (front) part of her lungs. Polly also had another worrying sign on her chest x-rays: she had a pneumothorax, which means that air was escaping from her right lung into the chest cavity outside the lung, causing her right lung to collapse. X-rays of her back, pelvis and hindlimbs revealed that both of her hips were dislocated, though luckily there were no fractures.

In consultation with Robyn a plan was made to anaesthetise Polly to drain the excess air off her chest, and reposition both of her hips. This was slightly risky because any anaesthetic can affect respiration and Polly's breathing was already compromised, but she needed both of her hips repositioned and her breathing was too rapid to allow safe drainage of the pneumothorax while she was awake. Nurse Chani took great care of Polly while she was under anaesthetic, ensuring that her oxygen saturation and blood pressure remained high, helping her to breathe when necessary, and keeping her plane of anaesthetic stable. Michelle drained 500mL of excess air off the right side of Polly's chest which immediately improved her breathing, and then repositioned both of Polly's hips. A further x-ray was taken to ensure they were both back in the correct position. A special sling, called an Ehmer sling, is normally applied for 5-7 days to any dislocated hip once it is repositioned. This tucks the hindlimb right up so that the knee joint is outwards and the hip joint inwards. It prevents the dog from putting any pressure on the leg, and helps to ensure the injured hip doesn't dislocate again straight away. We couldn't place slings on BOTH of Polly's limbs as she wouldn't have been able to walk! A cotton wool "ball" was carefully taped between Polly's back legs for 5 days, which was a different technique for keeping her hindlimbs in place! Polly's recovery from anaesthetic went well and Chani stayed with her until she was completely awake.

Polly continued to recover very well from her injuries and anaesthetic, and was up and walking again that same afternoon. She also regained her very healthy appetite! She went home two days later to a very happy Robyn, and was kept under strict rest for a further 10 days. Polly then slowly started increasing her exercise and is now happily running around again at Barge Park!



Polly's Hips
Before & After



Polly with vet Michelle

