

# Canine - Stump Granuloma

This Doberman Pinscher was presented with a chronic non-healing stump granuloma on a docked tail.



Wound presentation at day one.

## Presentation and History

One year old female neutered Dobermann Pinscher weighing 32kg presented with a chronic non-healing wound on her tail stump that had an improper tail docking at 2 days old by the breeder. The owner reported that the dog had the wound all along and that she hoped it would heal in time. Many types of treatment and different wound management modalities were tried since the dog was 8 weeks old

at the time of her first vaccination. For the past year the wound had intermittent severities and never healed completely. The other dogs at home had a habit of licking the tail and the dog had occasional acute episodes of pain that results in severe biting and licking at the stump.

## Clinical Examination & Investigation

The dog was presented for an annual booster vaccination. She had good body condition and a well-kept coat. She was responsive and alert, cardiopulmonary examination revealed no abnormalities and vitals parameters were within normal limits.

To tip over the tail stump had alopecia and the skin was ulcerated, the wound surface contained pale, irregular and incomplete granulation bed with exudates at its centre and had a rancid smell. Epithelisation was very poor and irregular and there was little soft tissue support over the caudal vertebrae.

Haematology, serum chemistry and urinalysis were unremarkable.

## Problem list / Differential diagnosis

- Non-healing wound granuloma.
- Pain and self-mutilation of the tail stump.
- Rancid smell from the wound.
- Probable neuroma formation at the tail stump.



Two weeks follow up.

## Discussion

Stump granulomas are infrequent findings in general practice in the UK today due to the decreased occurrence of tail docking. It is however still a problem and one of the listed post-operative complication of tail docking even if done by a skilled veterinary surgeon. It is uncommon to perform this procedure on puppies, for cosmetic reasons. It is considered unethical and illegal. Unfortunately we do see occasionally dogs that are docked and with them the associated complications. It is not the intention of this report to deal with the issues of tail docking but only with poor healing quality of these wounds and the ways to manage these problematic wounds.

Stump granulomas are developing mostly due to tension on the skin covering the caudal vertebrae, when not enough skin was left to cover the stump. A development of neuroma may result in severe pain and self-mutilation and in repeat tail injury. This brings about vicious cycle that will retard wound healing.

Surgical resection of the neuroma and unhealthy tissue, with amputation of at least one caudal vertebra can achieve resolution of all clinical symptoms and rapid healing. In this case surgical management was not a consideration due to owner preference.

Conservative management of stump granulomas is frustrating in most cases due to the fact that the environment for wound healing is sub optimal and repeat injury frequently result in chronic non-healing wound. In the presenting case the pain and sensitivity at the tail resulted in repeat injury and rancid smell was thought to attract the other dogs. Within the first week, twice daily application of VETGOLD reduced the pain sensation and alleviated the smell from the tail stump. This



Eight weeks follow up.

seems to be the first step in the healing of this wound. The wound presented in this case was healed completely within six weeks. All associated signs, considered to be perpetuating factors that retard the healing of this wound, were resolved.