

Cold Case Cockers

Big Hersey Mercy, Case #2008-02

Big Hersey entered Cocker Spaniel Rescue on May 14, 2005 as an owner turn-in to a veterinary clinic. Hersey had severe chronic ear infections, causing his ear canals to be so calcified that his ears stood out like bricks on the side of his head. After months of medication, it was determined that bilateral (both ears) ear ablation surgery was the only option. The surgery was successful in that it relieved the pain and misery of the ear infections; however, in the process a nerve was in his face was damaged. He now drools sometimes on the left side and his left eye

blinks upwards at times. The good news is that Hersey has some hearing, although sounds are slightly muffled.

Because Big Hersey is middle-aged (about 8) and not so good with kids and strangers, he has been overlooked by adoptive families. Once you earn his trust, a more devoted forever friend you will not find. He's a quirky fellow who stands in the bathtub and waits for you to turn on the water so he can get a quick drink. He thinks the sole purpose of the kitchen is to store his dog treats. When you walk by,

Hersey barks and bounces up and down hoping you are getting him a treat. He is generous with his affection to people he loves. His foster parents say he is a diamond in the "ruff" and would love for him to find a forever home of his very own. The ideal home for Hersey would be a quiet one with no kids and two or fewer canine brothers or sisters.



Total Ear Canal Ablation

Outer ear infections are very common in Cocker Spaniels. The long floppy ears, along with an excess of hair in the ear canal, can trap dirt, germs and moisture, making them more prone to recurring infections. Additionally, due to inbreeding, Cockers are susceptible to developing allergies, which are often the underlying cause of chronic ear infections.

When ear infections go untreated, irreversible damage is caused and the ear canal can actually turn to bone. When medical treatment is no longer effective, the last resort is total ablation, where the entire ear canal is removed

and healthy tissue is allowed to grow. The surgery is expensive and requires a specialist. Facial nerve paralysis, which occurs in 5-10% of patients including our Big Hersey, is just one of several complications that occur. The facial nerve wraps around the base of the ear canal and if bruised during surgery can cause problems with the eyelids and a droopy appearance on that side of the face.

After ear ablation, hearing is significantly impaired. However, since infection can also impair hearing, the difference after surgery may not be very noticeable. Many owners report better hearing after the

surgery, but in reality, the dog is probably feeling so much better that he is more inclined to react to sounds he ignored before. Cosmetically, the surgery does not adversely affect the outer appearance. There is no opening into the ear canal, but the floppy ears cover it.

Proper ear care is so important in Cocker Spaniels because ear infections are painful, smelly, cause deafness and are expensive and difficult to cure. For information on caring for your dog's ears, visit www.cockerkids.org/cockerinfo.html and click on "Caring for Your Cockerkid" at the bottom of the page.

Cold Case Cockers

- > Dogs who have been with us six months or longer and have not found homes
- > Older dogs
- > Minor health issues such as special food, daily eye medications, past ear surgery or suffering from allergies.
- > Behavior issues such as not liking other dogs or cats, separation anxiety, fear of strangers or just being "quirky."

We never give up solving our cold case files.

Dogs featured as Cold Case Cockers are available for adoption. Please e-mail cockerinfo@swbell.net for information on adoption.