

**Maddy and Lupus (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus – SLE)**  
Laura Brooker



At around age 11, Maddy developed sores on her stomach that would not heal. Our vet in Tampa prescribed antibiotics and a special soap, but nothing stopped the sores from forming, spreading, and leaving large black scabs on her stomach.

We spend half our time in the NC mountains and we have a wonderful vet there. Maddy has always had bad teeth so during a cleaning, the vet biopsied one of the sores and the results came back lupus. She prescribed prednisone to see if that would control the sores and she also cleaned off all the scabs. The sores continued to return but Maddy never seem to bothered by them.

This past summer, the sores started spreading to her legs, mouth and back. Not as many and not as large as the others but still more. Then on July 4, 2012, at age 12 1/2, Maddy suffered her first seizure. It lasted about 45 seconds. We had been over with friends all day and Maddy was fine, playing with their Beardies. No fireworks to alarm her. We called the vet at home and went to see her the next day, as Maddy seemed fine after the seizure.

She went back on prednisone and we were given vials of valium to give her if the seizures lasted more than two minutes. It was suggested we take Maddy to a neurologist. Through all of this we consulted with Dr. Linda and our vet was happy for her input and suggestions. I wish we could say the same for the vet/neurologist we saw in Tampa on a trip home.

She prescribed phenobarbital for Maddy and recommended an MRI to see if there was a brain tumor causing the seizures. We asked what the treatment would be if there was one and she said she could do chemo, which could extend Maddy's life an extra four months. If it wasn't a brain tumor causing the seizures, then the treatment would be prednisone, which Maddy was already taking. We did try Phenobarbital but after one day on it, after consulting with Dr. Linda, we stopped it as Maddy didn't tolerate it at all.

We elected not to do the MRI as we knew we would not put Maddy through chemo just to extend her life by four months. We returned to NC and continued with vet care there. Maddy had acupuncture weekly and she really seemed to feel better after these sessions. On August 23, she had a treatment and everyone at Tami's office commented on how well Maddy was doing. But that evening, she had a terrible seizure that went on and on. We had to give her the valium to control it. She had small seizures off and on all that night. In the morning she got up, acted perfectly normal, went out, had her breakfast and then took a nap. About an hour later she had another strong seizure and she never really came out of it, despite the valium. We consulted the vet all day and finally around 4:30 that afternoon, we met Tami at her office and said our goodbyes to our beautiful first Bearded Collie.

Footnote from Open Health Registry: There are 19 cases of SLE with an average age of onset of 7.6 years, the oldest age of onset of any of the AI diseases. 67% were female. SLE was the cause of death in eight.