

Case 10

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Signalment and History

- 5yo neutered male rabbit
- Nutrition - free choice pellets, timothy hay, kale leaves, lettuce leaves, apple slices, parsley and cilantro
- Low water consumption
- Presented for 2 day history of anorexia, lethargy, reluctance to move and suspect gastrointestinal stasis

Physical Exam Findings

- Absent gastrointestinal sounds
- Palpated large stomach filled with soft material and gas and a segment of caudal small intestine is suspected to be thickened, containing soft but dense material mixed with gas
- Fecal pellets palpated in colon
- T: 100.0° P: 210 bpm R: 90 breaths per minute
- Urine pH: 6.0

Abdominal radiographs are available

- 1) Describe your radiological findings
- 2) List your diagnosis/differential diagnosis

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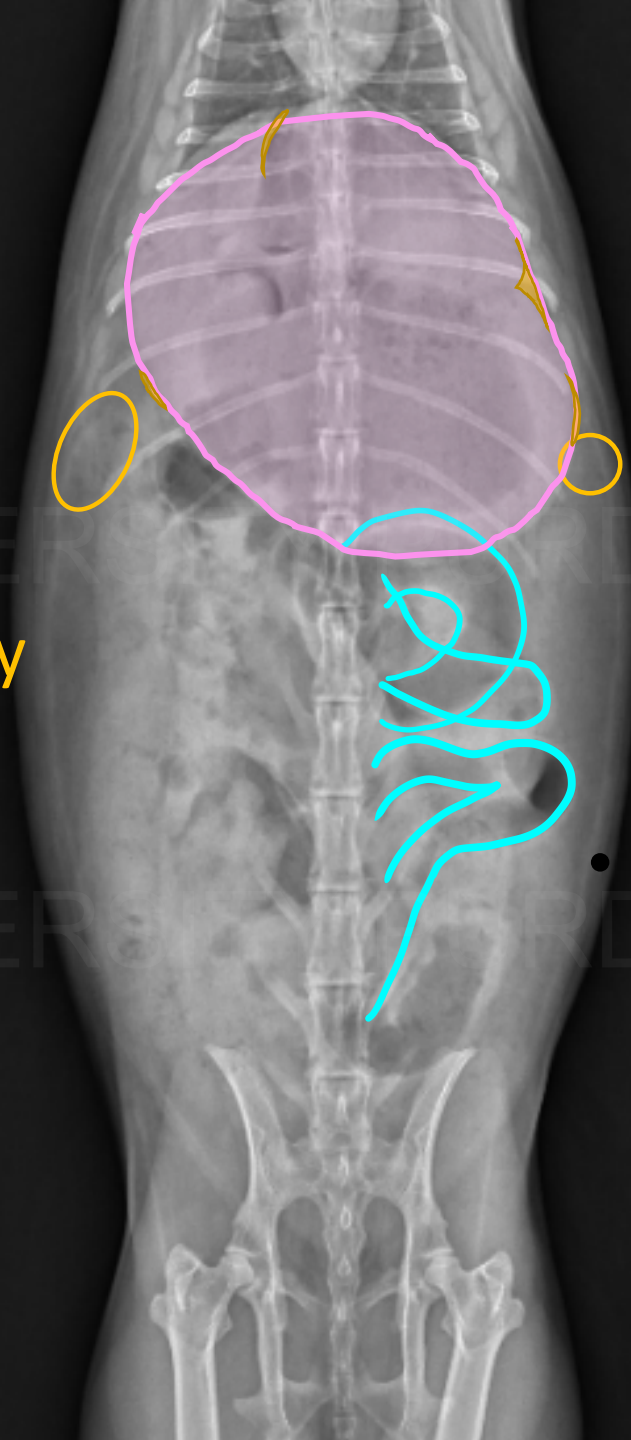
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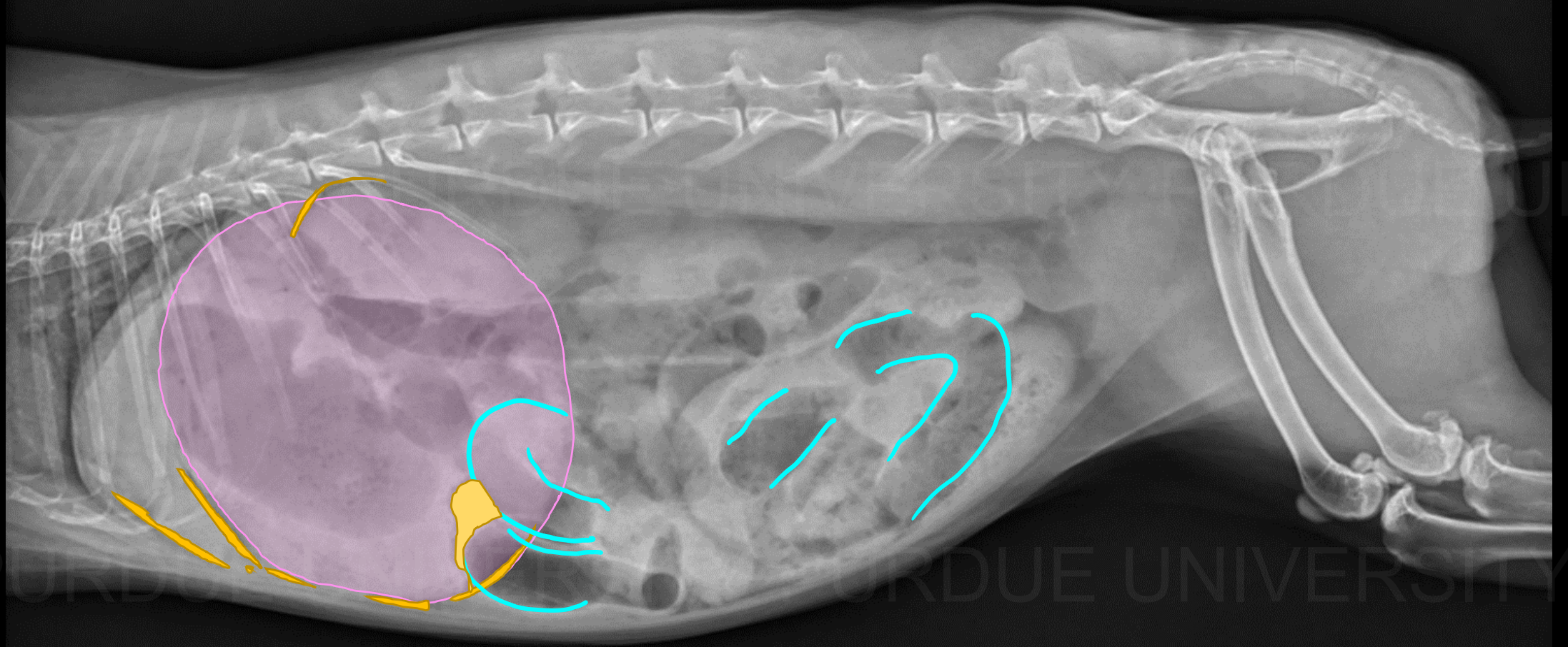
Radiological Findings

Irregular shaped free gas bubbles within the peritoneal cavity, particularly in the cranial abdomen and near the serosal margins of the stomach and liver



- Distended stomach (fluid, gas, and soft tissue opacities)

- Gas distended small Intestinal segments



Distended small intestinal segments (fluid, gas, and soft tissue opacities)

Irregular shaped free gas bubbles within the peritoneal cavity in the cranial abdomen

Distended stomach (fluid, gas, and soft tissue opacities)

Radiological diagnosis

Most likely small intestinal mechanical obstruction with perforation causing pneumoperitoneum and peritonitis

Remarks

- Rabbits are unable to vomit – due to well developed cardiac sphincter
- Normal rabbits - cecum and large intestine generally do not have large amount of gas accumulation
- Severe gastric dilation (bloat) or GI obstruction - considered abdominal emergency

Remarks

- Clinical signs of intestinal obstruction
 - Suddenly depressed and anorexic
 - Palpable dilated stomach
 - Abdominal pain or flaccid abdomen
- Death can occur abruptly and acutely (8 hours from the onset of clinical signs)
 - Shock
 - Peritonitis associated with rupture of the GI tract

Remarks

Common causes of GI stasis

- Lead toxicity
- Changes in the diet
- Reduced intake of food and/ or water
- Reduced activity
- Chronic stress
- Can lead to partial or complete obstruction or GI bloat

Common causes of small intestinal mechanical obstruction

- Foreign Body
- Pellets of compressed hair
- Locust bean seeds
- Carpet fibers
- Neoplasia- adenocarcinoma, papilloma of sacculus rotundus, lymphoma, intestinal leiomyoma, leiomyosarcoma

References

Harcourt-Brown TR. Management of Acute Gastric Dilation in Rabbits. *Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine*. 2007 Jul;16(3):168–74.

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DeCubellis J, Graham J. Gastrointestinal Disease in Guinea Pigs and Rabbits. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice*. 2013 May;16(2):421–35.