

## Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia Success Stories



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When a dog is diagnosed with autoimmune hemolytic anemia, its owner/caregiver is seldom prepared for dealing with such a serious life-threatening illness. Many times their first question will be, what can I expect in terms of survival and quality of life for my dog.

The "Success Stories" page is presented in order to answer those questions. We hope to show owner/caregivers whose dogs have recently been diagnosed with autoimmune hemolytic anemia that there is indeed hope. Over the coming months we will feature dogs who have been diagnosed with this disease and who are now living normal lives. Many of them have had no reoccurrence of the disease whatsoever. I hope you will be encouraged and filled with hope as you read these stories. I plan to change the stories on a monthly basis, so stop back often.

### March 2006



# Sherman

Sherman is a nearly 10 year old neutered male Cocker Spaniel owned by George and G.G. of Clearwater, FL. Sherman was diagnosed with autoimmune hemolytic anemia and [immune-mediated thrombocytopenia](#) (ITP) on June 10, 2004. A dog who has both AIHA and ITP at the same time is said to suffering from a condition called Evans Syndrome.

When George was asked to comment on the symptoms Sherman exhibited prior to being diagnosed with Evans Syndrome he replied, "Sherman was very weak and tired. It appeared that he wanted to just stay in one place and try to catch his breath. We took Sherman to our local veterinarian where blood testing revealed a PCV of 7, a very low platelet count and a positive Coombs test. In the first 24 hours after admittance to the veterinary clinic, Sherman received two Oxyglobin infusions. He was started on 136 mg Baytril twice per day, 100 mg cyclosporine twice per day and 36 mg prednisone twice per day. We were told that it was very likely that Sherman would die since the vets saw a 1 in 200 chance of him surviving the first 5 days. Two days after being admitted to the veterinary hospital Sherman was transferred to Florida Veterinary Specialists (FVS), a 24 hour critical care facility in Tampa, where he was hospitalized for 8 ½ days. While at FVS Sherman received 3 transfusions of packed RBC's. During the first 6 days of Sherman's illness he had no platelet or red blood cell formation. At one point Sherman had 0 platelets and 0 reticulocytes (immature red blood cells). Thankfully, in time, the medications helped Sherman's system 'kick start' his red blood cell production and he started to get better.

"Over the next year and a half, as Sherman's PCV and platelet count continued to rise, we slowly decreased his medications. At the present time Sherman takes 1.25 mg prednisone each morning and evening as well as 100 mg Cyclosporine every 3rd day. 1 g Carafate is given 2 hours prior to these medications with 2 mg Imodium given as needed. Sherman takes Sentinel for heartworm protection and Frontline Plus as a flea preventative. We have been advised by our veterinarian to never vaccinate Sherman again. Our veterinarian has sent letters to our county animal control officials and the state of Florida informing them that to vaccinate Sherman again could be an affront to his immune system."

When George was asked to comment on the current state of Sherman's health he replied, "At the onset of Sherman's illness, it was a double blow to our hopes to have him diagnosed with both AIHA and ITP. Having him alive and happy is a special blessing for us. His PCV at his last blood check on February 17, 2006 was 40 and his platelet count was 210k. At 58 pounds, Sherman is still very overweight, his normal weight is about 35 pounds. According to our veterinarian Sherman is back to about 70 to 80 percent of his normal self. Sherman knows he is not 100% but he is the same little puppy-boy as when we got him as a young pup. Our veterinarian believes that Sherman's illness was triggered by the antibiotic Cephalexin. Sherman was given this drug as a preventative measure after he received some small puncture wounds from being in a fight with a large dog. Sherman is an amazing dog, he is the Rock of Gibraltar, in the eyes of my family. My wife and I loved to hear him 'purr' after getting a treat or being petted. His tail can wag so fast it's a blur. Sherman is very much my wife's dog, where she is, there he is. When we leave the house, he awaits our return at the door from which we left. For a dog with Evans Syndrome to not only survive, but to be back home and thriving among our 2 other Cockers and our big mixed-breed dog is a thing I never thought I would see when Sherman was first diagnosed. We are especially thankful to our veterinarian and those on the [VetNet AIHA/IMHA Forum](#) who gave us HOPE, information and support during our blackest hours."

**New!!!**

**The Meisha's Hope Award**

Do you have a wonderful vet who has gone beyond the call of duty in treating your AIHA/IMHA dog? If so nominate him or her for the Meisha's Hope Award. To learn more [Click Here](#)

**Editor's Notes**

The Meisha's Hope Web site gives a donation to the Meisha's Hope AIHA/IMHA Fund # 338 at Morris Animal Foundation in honor of every dog that appears on the success stories page. To learn how you can help fund humane canine AIHA/IMHA health studies at Morris Animal Foundation [Click Here](#)

To learn how you can host a garage sale to benefit the Meisha's Hope AIHA/IMHA Fund #338 at Morris Animal Foundation [Click Here](#)

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If you have a dog or know of a dog who has survived with AIHA for at least one year and you would like their story told on this page please email me at [jdickson@cloudnet.com](mailto:jdickson@cloudnet.com)

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