

levels, oxygen also has profound anti-inflammatory effects: it helps to rid the body of infection, supports the immune system and helps accelerate healing, often dramatically.

Our first consult for the day is Diesel, a gorgeous 52kg bull mastiff with a huge hotspot – a localized skin infection that can be very painful – on his face. He's always glad to see me, despite the occasional atrocity that I commit such as squeezing his anal glands. I shave and clean his hotspot, clean out

when I attempted to give him a health check and trim his nails I was met with ferocious growls. I had to use sedatives and was glad to find some tooth decay – which I'm going to investigate further later in the morning – to justify their use.

It's only 10am and it's time to perform the laparotomy on Zen. I quickly do a last check on the little blue penguin – he's not looking much better – and Zak who has settled down relatively well and only has a slight head tremor left but is still pretty dazed.

We induce, shave and prep Zen and I do a midline incision and begin to investigate. It's not good news: an extensive pancreatic tumour is adhered to his spleen and stomach. I ring his owner and share the news. She's upset but glad that we finally know what is wrong with him and she requests that we put him to sleep on the table. I share the news with our nurse Loubie and tears well up in her eyes. As 'Silent Night' plays on the radio we put him to sleep peacefully.



An SPCA dog is safely anaesthetised ready for surgery

his ears which are full of black debris and send him home with some meds and herbs/homeopathics to ease the discomfort and to help get his body back in balance to prevent another hotspot from developing.

As Diesel's owner pays at the reception, Diesel gives a great big shake of his head and a glob of slobber gracefully flies over the counter into the lap of our receptionist Emma!

My next patient is Pepe the Chihuahua who is in for a dental examination and nail trim. As long as I don't poke and prod him, Pepe is an angel but last week

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I go to check on the penguin and find that he has just died as well. At least Zak is doing OK, even though we're not out the woods with him yet.

Pepe is next on the list for this morning's surgery. He's nice and chilled out after his premed and is easily anaesthetised. Once intubated, I find both sides of his jaw to have severely infected molars, most likely the reason for his stropy behavior last week. I'm delighted to find a logical reason and best of all it can be remedied. I extract his teeth while he receives vitamin C by I/V, Traumeel, various flower essences,