

# Coping with CMO

By Pam Evans, Padiwak

*Cassi (May 20, 1983 - February 17, 1997)*

We already had one Westie who had bonded with me. Thus our decision to purchase another that would bond with Dianne. We went the correct path and bought from a reputable/responsible breeder in our club, the SFBWHWTC. During the years I have been in Westies, I have learned that there is nothing perfect in this world of ours... be it fruit flies, people or dogs. We all have faults be they genetic, behavior or personality. I feel I was blessed to have been given this disease to cope with because CMO (Craniomandibular Osteopathy) is one disease that is treatable and goes into remission at the end of the dog's growth cycle (approximately 1 year of age).



Cassi was three months old when she started exhibiting some strange behavior. "Don't touch my face". At our club BOB Match in 1983, she went Best Puppy in Match despite while being examined for her bite she became a bucking bronco.

After few weeks, she became listless and lethargic and had a 103 temperature. So off to the vet... where she was diagnosed with Tonsillitis and was put on antibiotics. After about a week, she started showing signs of improvement. In hindsight, one week is the time frame a "pain/fever" stage lasts.

A month later, I became aware of bilateral lumps on the underside corners of her jaw. These growths were growing inward on the bottom of her jaw. I started reading Westie books on diseases and conditions pertaining to Westies. All I could find that fit her symptoms was a short paragraph in Ruth Faherty's book – Westies From Head To Tail.

I took her to our vet, told him what I thought, he X-Rayed her and diagnosed CMO. Cassi was prescribed prednisolone (5 mg.) tab 2 times daily for 5 days, 1 tab once daily for 10 days, 2 tabs every other day for 10 days.

After two weeks, Cassi was back in another "pain/fever" stage. I had been in contact with another veterinarian in Livermore, CA who was prescribing a much more aggressive/controversial prednisolone treatment for CMO (2mg. per LB of body weight).

Cassi was put on 3 (5mg.) tablets of prednisolone – 2 times daily for 5 days, 2 tabs once daily for 10 days then a maintenance dose of 3 tabs every other day.



Cassi remained on this dosage (approximately 6 ½ months) until she was weaned off approximately one month before her first birthday. She never went through another “pain/fever” stage during this time.

When she was re-X-rayed, all the abnormal bone growth that had been evident in her initial X-ray had completely reabsorbed.

Needless to say that during Cassi’s first year, I spent a great deal of quality time with her and the bond that developed between us was as strong as that of a mother and child. She thrived during this time with so much attention. She was a clown and talked in the “woo-woo” language some Westies speak.

All Westies are special but I hope that at least once in your lifetime you will be blessed and find that “special one” that is your soul mate!

Cassi was mine.

### ***Addendum***

In the years following treating Cassi with this aggressive Prednisolone treatment, I have been asked by others with CMO Westies to share my method of treatment with their vets. Their vets preferred to prescribe a less aggressive form of prednisolone treatment.

Their dogs continued to undergo pain/fever stages during their growth cycles and there was no reabsorption of the abnormal bone growth that occurred (in fact, there was more abnormal bone growth).

I bred another Westie bitch that presented with CMO in 1987. She was treated the same way Cassi was and MeMe lived past her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday as did Cassi.