

## Suffield Veterinary Hospital April 2016 Patient of the Month

Meet Elsie, a spayed female Labrador retriever, almost 2 years old, owned by the Murphy family of Windsor. This adorable photo was taken by Nicole Leonard of Spotted Love Photography.



Her owner says: *"If Elsie was human, she would be known as an old soul. Since the moment we picked her up, what has been most apparent is her absolute kindness (we know most dogs are like this, but she is different). She has a congenital heart condition that could shorten her life, and part of me wonders if she's aware of that and therefore needs to pack in as much love and happiness as she can every day. She is part of a very busy world — a family with four children — and we live in a dorm with 50 girls at Loomis Chaffee. It is not uncommon that a girl from the dorm will ask to take Elsie on a walk or ask me to let her into the common room so she can lay on someone's lap. She loves being with her human siblings and happily waits in her crate during the day, saving all her energy for when they come home. You can see her happiness when she is set free in the meadows. She ends every day facing out the window watching the world go by, like she's counting her blessings on another great day lived. And of course, she has her moments of freshness — eating the corner of the bathroom vanity, counter surfing and in typical lab-fashion, eating anything she can find...hence why she was hospitalized for 3 days after ingesting an entire 30-cube package of IceCube sugarfree gum. Her decline was fast and furious and we are very grateful for everyone at Suffield Veterinary Hospital and New England Veterinary Center for giving us more years to be part of this very special dog's life."*

Xylitol, while considered safe for humans and cats, can be deadly to dogs. Smaller amounts (as little as 1-2 sticks in small dogs) can cause hypoglycemia, leading to wobbliness, seizures or even death. Larger amounts — eating a whole package like Elsie did — causes severe damage to liver cells, leading to bleeding into the abdominal cavity and death. Immediate treatment is critical, and we are grateful the Murphys recognized the danger and brought her to the ER quickly. Three days in the ICU at New England Veterinary Center and Cancer Care pulled her through the crisis, though it might be a while before the Murphy's bank account will recover!

For serving as an urgent reminder to avoid Xylitol, a common ingredient in sugarless gum (and a growing number of other products), we are pleased to name Elsie our April 2016 Patient of the Month.

### **Suffield Veterinary Hospital**

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

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View all of our Patients of the Month on our web site, [www.suffieldvet.com](http://www.suffieldvet.com)