

## Suffield Veterinary Hospital May 2011 Patient of the Month

Iris is an 8-month-old, spayed female Pug, weighing in at just 11 pounds. The cute little rascal, shown here in a delightful photo courtesy of Enfield Moto Photo, is owned by the Eberhard family of Suffield. Iris goes out of her way to make friends with people and dogs (*and is a real SVH staff favorite*). Owner Pat says, "A story I like to tell is about Iris and the small blue marble. My grandson loves to create marble runs on the dining room table with a wooden construction set. One day, Iris managed to snatch one after it accidentally rolled onto the floor. Off she ran upstairs, with me in hot pursuit, playing marble keep-away. While I was trying to catch her, the marble disappeared. I figured she swallowed it. Should I call emergency at Suffield Vet Hospital? I decided that, being small enough, the marble would come out her back end! For three days, I picked up her poop in plastic bags and felt for the marble. No luck! Then, I saw Iris under the bed, frantically trying to get something with her paw, and out she came with the blue marble in her mouth! I caught the little rascal that time. No more marble games!"

Sadly, Iris has a disease called Brachycephalic pigmentary keratitis. Although we have seen Iris since she was a new member of the Eberhard family, early visits didn't indicate that any eye disorder would develop, which is common for this condition. Pat brought Iris to SVH because she had an injury to her cornea. During a routine ocular exam, several changes were detected. In addition to a corneal ulcer, which caused Iris to squint with discomfort, there was a cloudy film at the corners of both eyes and some sticky discharge. The cause of this condition is due to a combination of factors. The shape of the eyeball socket in short-nosed breeds is more like a teaspoon shape rather than the ice cream scoop shape of long-nosed breeds. The eyeball protrudes out of the socket, lending it to incomplete spread of tears and incomplete blinking. The contour of the eyelid margins and presence of skin folds allow hair to rub the surface of the eyes and wick the tears away, leaving the cornea less protected from the environment. Over time, this leads to chronic inflammation, and pigmentation develops on the corner surface of the eyes. Iris is being treated with several types of eye medicine; one to reduce inflammation, one to increase tear production and an antibiotic to encourage a corneal ulcer to heal.

After she was brought in to SVH because of the eye injury, Dr. Sabellico referred the Eberhards to a veterinary ophthalmologist because of the complex issues that pug eyes present. As with people, there are veterinary specialists in most disciplines: surgery, internal medicine, dermatology, neurology, etc. Those of us in general practice value the advice and accessibility of specialists. In Iris's case we are lucky to have an excellent ophthalmologist in South Deerfield, MA.

We expect our wonderful Pet of the Month, Iris, to make a complete recovery from the current crisis, but she will be at risk for future problems which the Eberhards, the ophthalmologist, and all the smitten staff at Suffield Veterinary Hospital will keep close watch over.



### *Suffield Veterinary Hospital*

Dr. Ann Huntington ♦ Dr. Anita Sabellico ♦ Dr. Dawn Burke ♦ Dr. Jean Herrman ♦ Dr. Griffin O'Connor  
577 East Street South (Route 159), Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-4041 ♦ [www.suffieldvet.com](http://www.suffieldvet.com)