

# **SHOT BY CUPID'S ARROW?**

**By Michael G. Cummings, DVM**



**With Valentine's Day rapidly approaching, I felt that this would make an interesting case for discussion.**

**Zoey, a 2 year old, mixed breed female dog had presented as an emergency with what looked like an arrow shaft through her leg. No, Cupid had not fired his bow, though she did have a lot of love to give to her owners. Zoey had arrived in the lobby with her tail still wagging.**



Upon examination, it was a piece of fencing that had become embedded in her leg and not an arrow shaft. She had happily bounded into the bedroom from playing outside with her housemate, with the wood in her leg, dripping blood all over the bedding! The owner had made the correct decision to bring her straight over to our hospital rather than trying to pull the offending “splinter” out. In attempting to do that pieces of wood could remain on the inside along with all the dirt associated with the fencing. If the dirt and splinters were to remain inside the wound, a serious abscess and infection would result.

The location of the embedded wood was very close to a large artery, the femoral artery, and damage to this blood vessel could result in significant hemorrhage. So it was decided that Zoey needed surgery to avoid any further internal damage and allow a chance to ensure all dirt is flushed out of the wound.



Here is Zoey getting prepared for surgery.

A long incision was made over the skin above the wood and carefully dissected away to avoid the large blood vessels. A lot of mud had been dragged inside the leg along with the wood. Some of the affected tissue had to be cut away to

ensure no chance of infection and speed up the healing of the wound.

Once all the affected tissue was removed, the area was thoroughly flushed with an antiseptic solution and the muscle and skin put back together again.

She was sent home with some pain medicine and antibiotics and made a speedy recovery. How did she manage to become impaled? Only Zoey and her partner in crime will know.

Since Cupid may strike for some of us over St. Valentine's Day, remember a few other important things:

1. If buying chocolate for loved ones, keep it away from your pets. It can be toxic.
2. Flowers? Ask the florist to avoid putting lilies in the arrangements. They are deadly to cats.
3. Fruit basket? Grapes can be toxic to dogs.

**Have a Happy St. Valentine's Day!!**

