

## Dog Lethargy and Strange Behavior

### **Solving the puzzle of a dog's mysterious behavior.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. My 17-pound Chihuahua mix was very docile when we went on our walk this morning. But once in the house, he immediately hid under the bed and didn't eat any of his treats! Later, when I picked him up he seemed fine, but then I put him down and he yelped. He was shaking a little, and his ears and nose were cold. When I was leaving for work, he seemed like he wanted to go with me. Any explanation?

A. Hopefully, by the time you read this, your Chihuahua is doing better. In the meantime, I love the challenge of a good mystery, so let's look at the clues:

1. Your dog was quiet when you went on a walk.
2. He hid under the bed.
3. He would not eat any treats.
4. He was shaking, and his ears and nose were cold.
5. He yelped when you put him down.

From a medical point of view, the problem list would be lethargy, lack of interest in food (anorexia), shaking and pain.

There are probably over 100 possibilities for these symptoms. To find out what's wrong, your veterinarian would take your dog's vital signs (temperature, pulse and respiration), perform a good physical exam, and possibly order blood tests and X-rays.

However, using a combination of intuition and guesswork based on your dog's breed, it's possible your dog is either constipated or has impacted anal glands. In small dogs that show general signs of discomfort, both of these problems are fairly common.

In the case of constipation, small amounts of laxatives or canned pumpkin can help.

In more severe cases, a medical enema in the hospital is required. For impacted anal glands, your veterinarian must express them and possibly infuse them with medication if they're infected.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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