

Stick With Dog's Treatment Plan for Little White Dog Shaker Syndrome

The trembling disease which typically strikes young white dogs, such as Maltese, typically is cured by age 2.

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a Maltese with White Shaker syndrome. She has been on steroids for the last 20 days, and we are weaning her to a lower dose. I don't see much improvement. A couple months ago, her nose started to turn brown. She has lost her personality and sleeps all the time. Please help with more information.

A. Little White Dog Shaker Syndrome was initially diagnosed in small, purebred white dogs, such as the Maltese, but since it was first recognized, dogs of larger sizes and different colors have also been affected.

Usually, full-body trembling is noticed before a dog is 2 years old. It can be accompanied by other neurologic signs, such as a head tilt, poor coordination, or seizures. The disease's cause is unknown, but it may be a virus or overactive immune system.

Changes in coat or skin color such as you are seeing with your dog's nose are usually not related to the disease.

In general, the outlook for dogs with White Dog Shaker Syndrome is very good after treatment with steroids such as prednisone. Most dogs are fully recovered after the age of 2, so I encourage you to be patient and continue the steroid treatment.