

Bulldog Wins VPI's Most Unusual December Claim

Vets performed surgery on Lulu to remove 15 pacifiers, a bottle cap, and piece of ball.

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Veterinary Pet Insurance of Brea, Calif., selected Jennifer Zwart's English Bulldog, Lulu, as the most unusual claim it received in December 2008, one of more than 75,000 claims received that month.

For six months, Zwart believed her daughter's missing pacifiers had simply been misplaced, but one day she saw Zulu licking a dropped pacifier.

"I didn't pick it up right away, because I never thought she would eat it, but I turned around and the pacifier was gone," Zwart said. "I took Lulu to the veterinarian and expected that an X-ray would reveal the pacifier. The X-ray was unclear, so the veterinarians decided to perform surgery. Midway through the surgery, they started a 'binky count,' as they pulled out pacifier after pacifier. They had never seen anything like it. Over the course of six months, Lulu had swallowed 15 pacifiers, a bottle cap, and a piece of a basketball."

Zwart said that Lulu handled the surgery well and now makes sure that pacifiers are never left lying around.

As the most unusual claim submitted in December, Zwart's claim will be placed in the running for VPI's first Hambone Award. Each month, VPI employees will nominate the most interesting claim and in July 2009 ask the public to vote for the most unusual claim of the year.

The Hambone Award is named in honor of a VPI-insured dog who got stuck in a refrigerator and ate an entire Thanksgiving ham while waiting for someone to find him. The dog was eventually found, with a licked-clean ham bone and a mild case of hypothermia.

All pets considered for the award made full recoveries and received insurance reimbursements for eligible expenses.