

PARTING SHOT SUBMITTED PHOTO FROM BILL GRIESAR

A weekly snapshot from The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer photographers



Bill Griesar, of Astoria, loves walking his dog, Duncan, on the Astoria Riverwalk in the morning.

ODDITY*Cone dread*

Some seek alternatives to pets' post-surgery 'cone of shame'

By SUE MANNING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Call it the cone of shame. Radar dish. Elizabethan collar.

Whatever its name, pets seem to hate the stiff, lampshade-like piece of plastic that vets often put around their necks to keep them from biting or chewing wounds, stitches or other problem areas.

"She was not a happy camper. She couldn't eat in it, she couldn't play in it, she couldn't move around in it," Brooke Yoder of Millersburg, Ohio, said about her Maltese-Shih Tzu dog, Marley, who got a cone to protect her stitches after she was spayed.

The first cones were handmade by pharmaceutical salesman Edward J. Schilling in the early 1960s, and they remain the best-selling wound or suture protection on the market for pets, said Ken Bowman, president of the Chino, California-based KVP International, a cone manufacturer.

Yet his company and others are trying to come up with something better.

Inflatables, soft collars

KVP makes recovery collars in 14 styles, including two inflatables and two soft collars. They have cones to fit pets from mice to mastiffs.

The company is running studies on whether the cone acts like an amplifier, potentially hurting an animal's ears, and whether the loss of vision it causes can create stress.

One alternative has come from Stephanie Syberg of St. Peters, Missouri, founder and president of Cover Me by Tui, which makes a one-piece, post-surgical garment for dogs.

"I was in veterinary medicine myself for 16 years. I was constantly being asked, 'What can we use instead of the plastic cone?'" Syberg said.

Her onesie, made of Peruvian cotton, was tested on 200 dogs. "Vets are seeing the calming effect," she said. "The fabric is breathable so it promotes healing."

She sells pullover and step-in versions at TulanesCloset.com.

Dr. Charlie Sink, who runs the Grand Paws Animal Clinic in Surprise, Arizona, bought 3,000 of them on his first order.

"They are the softest cloth and the dogs just love them. You can wash them. It's an amazing product," said Sink, who has been a vet for 47 years.

But there are times, he said, when only the hard



Damian Dovarganes/AP Photo

Puffin, a 3-year-old terrier mix, wearing a 'cone of shame' device at the spcaLA South Bay Pet Adoption Center in Hawthorne, Calif., in March.

cone will work: if the dog's injury is on a body part not covered by the onesie, for instance.

'Awful'

Gayle Swetow of Henderson, Nevada, has become a regular customer of Syberg's. She was told to put a cone on her 2-year-old pit-bull mix to protect a 6-inch incision after he had surgery on his hip.

"I slept with him every night downstairs because I couldn't bear to put a cone on him," she said. "That didn't work so I started frantically looking up dog onesies or dog pajamas."

"I think I've bought 10 of them already because the dog has an allergy too. I keep him in this every day," Swetow said.

The cones, she continued, are "awful. The dogs can't see where they are going. They can't jump up. Eating, moving or walking is nearly impossible with a cone. But they can do anything and everything if they have a onesie on."

The cone's unpopularity has also led to some creative alternatives by designers and artists at the website More Than a Cone (www.morethanacone.com).

In addition to making the cone more attractive, Bowman said, efforts are under way to make it more comfortable and effective too.



Gayle Swetow/Via AP

Gayle Swetow shows her dog Mike, wearing a Cover Me by Tui one-piece, patented, post-surgical garment, which takes the place of a plastic cone.

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