



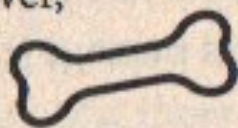
Thank You, Dr. Dog



When Steve Werner of Brentwood, Missouri, started feeling a little under the weather, he did what most of us would do. He called his doctor. But his diagnosis one month later came from a less traditional source—his dog, Wrigley.

A fit and active 40-year-old, Steve suddenly started experiencing some problems with his health. He had a ringing in his ears, fatigue, and a general sense of not feeling quite right. Suspecting a problem with his heart, his doctor ran a battery of tests, ranging from blood pressure and cholesterol checks to an EKG and a stress test. Everything came back normal. His doctor could find nothing wrong with Steve.

So Steve carried on with his life. What else was there to do? His greatest pleasure was curling up at the end of the day with his 11-year-old golden retriever, Wrigley. And that's when he noticed that she was constantly sniffing him. "I thought



it was just a friendly sniff,” says Steve, “but after a week or so I noticed it was always focused on the same spot, my right ear.” And it wasn’t a “looking for food” sniff, according to Steve. It was a more prolonged “what’s going on here?” kind of sniff.

Around that same time, Steve happened to see a news story on TV about dogs that are specially trained to work in medical settings. The remarkable canines featured in the story were able to detect and warn patients about tuberculosis, epileptic seizures, and cancer. Well, Wrigley certainly had no medical training, but Steve started to wonder if maybe she knew something that he—and his doctors—didn’t.

Steve picked up the phone and scheduled another visit with his doctor. This led to an MRI and the discovery that he had a non-malignant brain tumor about the size of a ping-pong ball. Although the acoustic neuroma wasn’t life-threatening, it could have led to major problems with balance, hearing loss, facial paralysis, or even a stroke if it hadn’t been found.

Now, after a successful surgery, Steve is back home with his best friend—“Dr.” Wrigley. Whether it was intuition or coincidence, Wrigley’s unusual behavior saved her owner’s life. “I’m convinced that Wrigley was looking out for me, and I feel very blessed to have her in my life,” says Steve. Thankfully, she hasn’t sniffed his ear since.

