

## Siamese Wins Strangest Claim Contest for June

**Cat has full recovery after swallowing needle and thread, says VPI.**

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A vet technician noticed what was causing Scooter's pain: a sewing needle and thread that the cat had swallowed. Each month, Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. selects what its employees find to be the strangest case from all of the claims submitted. In June, the strangest was a matter of cat versus sewing needle.

"It was on Memorial Day when our Siamese cat, Scooter, went from happily scampering around to suddenly foaming at the mouth and violently shaking her head," said Margaret Stedt of San Clemente, Calif.

Stedt and her husband rushed Scooter to an emergency clinic, where the cat was treated with seizure medication and kept overnight for observation. The next day, the Stedts took Scooter to a neurologist on the advice of their veterinarian. At the neurologist's office, the technician who was prepping Scooter for an MRI found the culprit: a needle with some thread still attached to it.

Stedt said she had hemmed a pair of pants two weeks before the incident, and Scooter had ingested the needle without Stedt knowing. It didn't cause any damage beyond the tongue until it somehow advanced through Scooter's throat and made direct contact with her brain. Scooter was anesthetized and the needle was removed. A veterinarian prescribed antibiotics for an abscess that had formed from the puncture wounds. After the procedure, Scooter's seizures instantly subsided and she has since fully recuperated.

Stedt has taken the situation to heart as an opportunity to warn other cat owners.

"Scooter was literally centimeters away from dying from simply swallowing something that is in almost every home," she said. "It's direct proof that anything can happen, even to an indoor cat that's young and vibrant. We've certainly learned the importance of keeping ingestible items safely away from our pets and want to remind other pet owners to do the same."

As the most unusual out of more than 80,000 claims VPI received in June, Scooter's case is now in the running for the company's first Hambone Award. The award is named in honor of a dog that got stuck in a refrigerator and ate an entire Thanksgiving ham while waiting for someone to find him. He was eventually found and suffered only a mild case of hypothermia. Each month, VPI employees will choose the strangest claim and in September of this year, VPI will ask the public to vote for the strangest claim of the year, which will be the winner of the Hambone Award. The winner will receive a bronze trophy in the shape of a ham bone.