

Bravecto Serious Side Effects The personal story of "Aja" (035)

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Aja

Stephanie Hope

One week ago today, my parents and I watched our family dog die. Aja had been dying for two weeks, ever since she got a three-month flea and tick treatment called Bravecto. This drug is made by Merck. This drug has been suspected to cause organ failure, edema, heart murmurs, difficulty walking, skin lesions, pancreatitis, liver failure, and untold amounts of pain. Aja experienced all of the above after she was given this drug. This drug is still being prescribed by veterinarians, whom Merck tells that it is safe.

We decided to euthanize Aja after two weeks of watching this drug eat her from the inside. My parents spent hundreds of dollars on every imaginable test to figure out what was wrong with her and how we could save her. There were a litany of symptoms, but no way to treat the cause of these symptoms, because this drug, this poison, had been absorbed by her body. My incredible mother, [Brigitta](#), slept downstairs on the couch so that Aja wouldn't need to suffer alone, and my incredible father, [Paul](#), made dozens of unique meals for Aja to coax her to eat as her appetite waned.

After one week, Aja was struggling to walk. After one week, when I came to visit her, my mom filmed how Aja got up off her bed to greet me, and stood beside me for several minutes, because it was so rare for her to get up at all. After one week of Bravecto working its way through her body, my once sprightly, energetic dog struggled to stand for more than a few minutes.

After a week and a half, my parents had to carry her outside in a sling. After two weeks, Aja's dog bed was lined with absorbent pads because she could no longer even get up. After two weeks, Aja had to be fed with a syringe. After two weeks, she could only feebly wag her tail and lift her head, for moments. After two weeks, Aja's eyes became glassy and dull. After two weeks, Aja was asking us to let her die.

Two weeks ago I walked into the animal hospital carrying Aja in my arms like an offering to some cruel god. Her limbs had swollen to twice their size. In her final examination, the vet discovered a heart murmur that Aja had never had before. The vet suspected there was fluid in Aja's lungs, and that she had pancreatitis, a failing liver, imminent renal failure, and systemic organ problems. There is no bringing a dog back from that.

Aja is dead, a mere three weeks after we gave her Bravecto. Please, if you have a dog, do not give them Bravecto. Do not give them NexGard, another internal flea and tick medication made by Merial and also suspected to be behind a number of canine deaths. Tell your vet to look into the numerous well-documented side effects caused by these drugs. Look into them yourself. And at the very least, sign this petition to get Bravecto removed from the market: <https://www.change.org/p/bravecto-flea-tick-treatment-should-be-banned>

My dog is dead. Yours doesn't have to be.

*** Here is my mom's documentation of her symptoms:**

Aja was a very healthy dog with no ailments and did not take any medications. Prior to getting one dose of Bravecto, Aja got topical treatments for flea/tick prevention. The first symptom we noticed, the day after giving her Bravecto, was very soft, green stool that continued for several days.

Then she became picky with her food, and we were surprised that our strong eater had any issues. I noticed that she was slower on her walks, then on day four she moved very slowly and I became suspicious about the drug she had taken. On day five I said it is time to go to the vet.

The vet did not believe that it was a reaction to the medicine but I insisted it must have been, as the dog was fine before taking the drug. He suspected her slow moving could be related to having Lyme disease. Aja was vaccinated against Lyme disease, but the vaccine is only about 80% effective.

He did two expensive tests to determine that it was not Lyme disease. He gave antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs to ease her symptoms, as there is no antidote for Bravecto. Her diarrhea improved, but she was getting worse and had difficulty getting on her hind legs five days after taking the drug.

We went again to the vet, as her hind legs began to show edema, indicating a kidney problem. He had also done several blood tests and none of them confirmed an underlying disease. All symptoms were, in our opinion, related to the drug. He did not know what to do

and referred us to a specialist. They again did a battery of tests and said they could only treat the symptoms. Unfortunately, every day more symptoms emerged, leading to another visit at the specialist, while Aja continued to deteriorate, and in the end nothing could be done to save her. In her final examination before we made the decision to put her down, the emergency hospital vet detected a heart murmur, which she had never had before.

I called Merck, the maker of Bravecto, to report the adverse reaction it had on our dog and that Aja had to be put to sleep to end her suffering. When Aja was seen by the vet after the initial side effects showed up, we insisted that Merck be informed, which the vet did. Still, both the vet and Merck doubted that there was any relationship between Aja's symptoms and the drug, which we disputed then, and which I disputed again today during my phone call with Merck.

Merck had the info from the vet on file. I insisted that they update the file with the additional side effects Aja experienced and how more and more of these emerged during her three week ordeal. We know from research that Aja's side effects were not unique and had been reported by many other dog owners. We also know that several hundred deaths have been reported. By law, the drug manufacturer is required to take the information and report it to the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine in the U.S and the European agency that regulates veterinary drugs.

However, all they do is feel sorry for the animals and collect the data. Only when enough people inform the drug maker about the adverse and often deadly effects the drug has had on dogs, and there is a pattern of adverse effects, will something be done and the drug hopefully be removed from the market.

That is one reason why it is important that everyone who has given Bravecto (or NexGuard) or any medication to their dog report any side effects to the drug manufacturer, even if it is not proven. Many dogs don't react like this to taking Bravecto or Nexgard. But a significant number (hugely underreported, by any measure) develop serious side effects after the first dose, or sometimes after the second or third.

There's no correlation yet between breed, age, or other circumstances. It's like playing Russian Roulette with an animal's life, which is so needless given that there are far less severe alternatives to internal flea/tick medication already on the market with years of research behind their safety.

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