



ABOUT THE DISEASE

Masticatory myositis (MM) is a disorder seen in canine patients in which the immune system targets and attacks the muscles of the head or face responsible for chewing (mastication). These muscles become incredibly painful and swollen, often preventing patients from even opening their mouths to eat, drink, or receive medications. Attempting to force the mouth open can cause excruciating pain.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

A physical examination, thorough clinical history, and a patient's inability to open their mouth is highly suggestive of **MM**.

If warranted, the definitive diagnostic test for **MM** is a muscle biopsy.

TREATMENT

The current treatment for **MM** is an immune-suppressive dose of glucocorticoids and pain medications given over several months. Early and aggressive treatment offers the highest chance for successful management.

Once the symptoms are under control, medications are slowly reduced but some require life-long management.

Supportive care includes transitioning to a soft kibble or canned food, or in extreme cases the placement of a feeding tube.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- The outlook for individual patients depends upon the degree of inflammation in the muscles and the response to therapy. If the patient regains normal jaw function and the ability to open and close their mouth without pain, the prognosis is good.