

A day in the *life* Migna, Dexter's Owner

I feel a wet, scratchy nose on my face as I wake. It's another day—another day of worry. I manage a smile for my sweet five-year-old American bulldog, Dexter. I can sense his discomfort; his skin issues are getting worse. Today is the day I have an appointment at the APL's wellness clinic. I wonder, can I afford to get Dexter the care he needs? I'm already struggling to get by, and now the financial strain of his treatment has become insurmountable. And he is not getting any better. Two hours later, Dexter and I are standing outside the APL with several other families and their pets, waiting to get inside and be seen. They don't have a lot of waiting space inside, but I'm grateful to have access to this care—any care. It's a hot day. Beads of perspiration—from the heat and the uneasiness of what's next—start to form on my brow. I kneel down and hold Dexter tight.

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and going. We're seen by a member of the APL medical team who, upon examination of Dexter, explains that his skin issues are severe and will require extensive treatment. I turn my attention to Dexter and we lock eyes. My heart is pounding. I know I might not be able to afford

The close beating of his heart calms my nerves. Inside there's a lot of activity—cats and dogs studying each other; pet owners talking with APL staff; and many people and animals coming

to have him treated. I have thought about it and I am prepared to make the crushing decision to surrender my sweet boy to the APL if that is the best thing for him. He needs someone who can afford to care for him. The kind person at the APL tells me that they will do all they can to help Dexter and to help us stay together as a family. The tests Dexter underwent at the APL showed that he has a thyroid condition that was causing his skin issues. Oh no, I thought. Another condition. Another expense. But the APL staff member explained that this was good news. All of those expensive medications we once thought he needed would be significantly reduced! Not only can I afford to take care of Dexter, but I was also able to afford the exam and tests performed by the APL that gave us the good news! Because of the support from the caring people at the APL, Dexter and I can continue to be a family, and I can give him the life he deserves!



Dexter and Migna