

Alternative Therapies

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS, DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

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HOLISTIC AND ALLOPATHIC MEDICINE

Western medicine is called conventional or allopathic medicine, which means symptom suppressing. Treatment works fast, suppresses symptoms, and relieves pain by using drugs, and surgery. However the underlying causes of the illnesses are not addressed and medications need to be constantly taken or symptoms recur and often become chronic problems.

The Holistic veterinarian's philosophy, is to look at all aspects of the animal and by using a variety of natural therapies, help the animal heal itself. Holistic care concentrates on the lifestyle of the animal, nutrition and diet, the environment, and the psychological state, focusing on the cause of the problem. Alternative therapies refer to treatments used in place of Western medicine and complementary refer to holistic and alternative treatments are used in combination with conventional care.

Alternative and Holistic therapies may include, Chiropractic care, Herbal medicine, Homeopathy, Nutritional therapies, Massage, T-Touch, Bach Flower Essence, Acupressure, Therapeutic Massage, Acupuncture, and even Traditional Chinese Medicine. We offer this information for educational purposes only. Finding an Allopathic Veterinarian that is open to Alternative Therapies is very important for you, and more importantly, for your pet. There will be emergencies or times in the life of your pet that will require western medicine, and other times when a combination of therapies are best used, or where holistic care will be in the best interest of your pet's health. We encourage you to open the door to learning more about these alternative therapies, that will enhance the care and life of your own precious pets, but may also be of great help in caring for client's pets within your pet sitting business. You may want to discuss any of these alternative therapies with your pet's healthcare professional.

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NUTRITION

Adequate and balanced nutrition is necessary for all life's well-being. Inadequate nutrition produces many disease conditions and can shorten life expectancy. Before 1960 most people fed their pets leftovers from meals they consumed, and before that the animals in the wild killed and ate their prey. Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM states, "Think of the body as a house. If you build a strong foundation (pregnant mother's diet), the walls of the first story provide the support for the upper stories (puppyhood and adulthood). A roof that is made of the right materials and placed at the correct angles will be a protective covering over the whole house that will withstand even the most violent weather (immune system). Your house will outlast those around you that are built of less solid materials."

Imagine this... giving your pet REAL food. Whole foods fed without chemical preservatives are the foundation of a good diet and promote health and well-being for your pet. While commercial pet food is convenient it may not be the healthiest way to feed your pet and may cause disease.

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A HOLISTIC VETERINARIAN'S SCALE OF NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY IN PET FOOD

The following guidelines are based on a scale of 1 (the poorest) to 10 (the best) to help you determine a better diet for your pet:

- 1.** All meat. Animals in the wild don't eat just meat.
- 2.** Soft-moist food. These diets are high in sugar, chemicals, dyes, propylene glycol, and other additives to give them shelf life, softness, and an artificial look.
- 3 and 4.** Soft-moist and dry combinations-"generic brands." The cheap generic and store brands have been incriminated in veterinary literature for their poor quality. They are infamous for mineral deficiencies, particularly zinc.
- 5 and 6.** Standard commercial diets - the "name" brands. They are adequate in most cases for most normal, healthy, young to middle-aged animals, but they are not optimum. They are merely adequate. They are made to be competitive and are usually loaded with chemicals. An average thirty-pound dog eating this food regularly will consume nine pounds of chemicals a year!
- 7 and 8.** Top shelf lines. These products, including Science Diet and Iams, feature higher-quality ingredients but still have artificial preservatives and other chemical additives.
- 9.** The so-called natural lines. This category includes Precise, Natural Life, and Verus,

products made with the finest-quality ingredients. They use vitamin C and vitamin E as natural preservatives instead of using artificial preservatives, and the added minerals are chelated with amino acids for better absorption.

10. Homemade. The very best food you can feed your animal is the homemade diet made with fresh foods. You can't do better for your animal.

It is advised never to feed a diet below level five. It is recommended that you feed either a homemade diet or a level nine food with supplementation, to make sure you are giving optimum nutrition to your pet.

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HERBS

Herbal and natural remedies have been used successfully throughout the centuries to treat many things from worms and fleas, skin problems and mange, kidney and bladder problems, wounds and fractures, diarrhea and constipation, heart disorders, and jaundice to name a few. They are also used to prevent many health problems. The strength of herbs lies in the unique and complex properties of the original natural substance. They assist the healing process by helping the body eliminate and detoxify. They also act as tonics that strengthen tissues in the body. The flowers, leaves and roots, of herbs can be used in a variety of ways such as whole, powders, pastes, a poultice, fresh, dried, infusions, and tinctures. They can be very nutritious, and filled with vitamins and minerals. Following are a few examples:

Herbs like nettle, alfalfa, rosemary, calendula flowers, and seaweeds, are rich in vitamins and minerals, which promote a healthy coat, and the mucus membranes in the body benefit as well as all the organs, bones and teeth. The high mineral content also discourages a dog from eating stools. **Alfalfa** helps with the pain of arthritis.

Using **red clover, nettle, calendula, rosemary and yarrow,** as a tea applying the infusion on a cloth or just pouring it on the skin as a rinse for itching, scratching and coat problems.

Aloe Vera helps soothe and heal skin conditions. Use for bee stings to relieve discomfort.

Thyme vinegar is used specifically for wasp bee stings.

Use raw **garlic** either cut up, or make a **garlic** vinegar, use raw not heated distilled vinegar) and put on food daily is very beneficial for health and can help keep fleas at bay. **Garlic** disinfects the digestive tract and assists in the restoration of friendly bacteria. **Garlic** has antiviral properties and is known for its effectiveness in treating lung ailments. The oils in garlic are excreted through the respiratory tract and are good for treating

bronchitis.

Anise helps to remove excess mucus.

White horehound combined with coltsfoot dilates the airways and helps loosen mucus.

Comfrey supplements are an expectorant to remove mucus.

Barberry stimulates the liver and promotes the flow of bile, and has astringent and antiseptic qualities that soothe and strengthen the urinary tract.

Milk Thistle is used to help the liver get rid of built up toxins in the body.

Herbal teas made from caraway seed, yucca, and gentian aid in digestion. Chamomile is an excellent nerve relaxant used to treat digestion problems caused by anxiety. It reduces gas and comforts the digestive system. Peppermint oil and teas, soothes the stomach lining, subdues the urge to vomit and also lessens gas.

Black walnut expels internal parasites and tapeworms.

Slippery Elm treats inflammatory conditions such as asthma, arthritis, cystitis, ulcers, colitis gastritis and other inflammatory bowel problems, constipation and or diarrhea.

A combination of liquid **chlorophyll** with **aloe** juice or with **psyllium, licorice root,** and **hibiscus flowers** help cats with hairball problems.

Yucca, given orally is effect in reducing the itch response in allergic. It is also used to manage pain from soft tissue inflammation, reduces scarring, and it is an excellent anti-inflammatory and has been proven as a safe and effective substitute for steroid-based medications.

Parsley sprinkled into your pet's meal will strengthen its immune system, especially in cats. Also parsley tea can soothe the irritated area in the urinary tract.

Mugwort and Gravel Oak also provide relief from urinary tract disorders.

Echinacea is an antibacterial herb that helps in the prevention of infection and stimulates the immune system.

Witch Hazel, used topically, has an astringent action that stops bleeding and reduces inflammation and bruising.

Woundwort diluted, cleanses wounds and provides relief for sores by using a compress.

Calendula in lotion, cream or gel form is helpful for cuts and bites, stimulates healing and reduces pain and inflammation, (do not apply to deep open wounds, as it heals to

quickly, causing scabbing and prevents drainage for abscesses).

Couchgrass leaves as a spring tonic (animals seek this grass outside).
Nettle for asthma and sinus problems.

Burdock root cooked like a carrot and is used as a blood purifier, and may help to correct under lying skin problems.

These are just a few herbs that can be used safe and effectively at home to alleviate minor problems or just enhance your pet's health.

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SUPPLEMENTS

Commercial pet foods put many vitamins and supplements in their food, and say it is complete and balanced. However, adding supplements to your pets diet can enhance his/her health and boost a sick, arthritic, or geriatric, pet's immune system so the animal can heal itself. Supplements can be given in the form of different Vitamins or can be "Green foods," Colostrum, and many others. It's important to remember that each animal is an individual, and needs to be treated as such. It is always wise to talk with your Holistic Vet, about what your pet's specific needs are when supplementing with anything. Listed below are a few frequently used supplements.

Vitamin C: (Ascorbic acid)(Ester C) Helps fight viral and bacterial conditions, and supports the immune system. May help to deter hip dysplasia and other joint inflammations, as it enables the body to properly mobilize calcium, which helps to keep bones and joints from deteriorating. While dogs and cats do produce their own vitamin C, an injured or sick animal cannot make enough to heal itself so supplementing may be needed.

Vitamin A: Helps build body tissue. Deficiencies in vitamin A can result in dry, itchy skin, and gum and teeth problems. It keeps the liver, the main metabolic and detoxifying organ in the body, kidneys and lungs working smoothly. Giving vitamin A to your pets the most natural way is in cod liver and halibut liver oils.

Vitamin B: Helps to boost the immune system, gives energy, and boosts the appetite.

Vitamin E: Promotes circulation of the heart and arteries. It helps connective tissue (skin and muscle) from losing its elasticity, and it also works as an antioxidant.

Green food can include anything from sprouted grains, sea kelp, alfalfa, green magma, spiruilia, and sea vegetation.

Colostrum: Strengthens the immune system, it helps to prevent autoimmune disorders and allergies, builds lean muscle tissue, helps to repair tissue and regenerates nerve cartilage, bone and skin.

These examples are just a few of the most important supplements for your pet's health.

There are numerous supplements available on the market for your pet's individual needs.

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ENZYMES

Enzymes are protein like compounds that are the driving force behind all life processes and are responsible for keeping the internal systems working. Enzymes are produced within living cells in plants and animals. The most important enzymes are metabolic and digestive enzymes. Metabolic enzymes do the repair work and remodeling and structuring of each living cell, organ and tissue. Digestive enzymes aid in the process of digesting food, and enhance the absorption of nutrients. Proper digestion affects the body's overall health in very profound ways, and without absorption of nutrients the body becomes out of balance and toxins store up in joints, tissues and organs.

Incomplete digestion allows partially digested particles to be reabsorbed into the bloodstream from the large intestine, creating immune dysfunction, inflammation, allergies and other problem. Most raw foods have enzymes in them, however when foods are cooked at high temperatures enzymes are destroyed. Most processed food does not contain enzymes the body needs, so the body will make a withdrawal from it's own enzyme bank depleting it. Once the enzyme bank becomes depleted, and after a period of time this leaves the animal vulnerable to allergies, disease, cancer, and promotes the aging process. When the immune system is under stress, it uses enzymes to maintain body functions. Enzymes are lost through sickness, anxiety, pregnancy, urine and feces, and unless they are replaced the whole immune system is compromised. Animals of all ages benefit from enzyme therapy for optimum health and to promote healing of injuries, and serious illness.

Examples of enzymes:

Prozyme
Wobenzyme

Examples of use:

When taken with food, improves food breakdown and absorption of nutrients.

Taken on an empty stomach between meals, the enzymes are carried by the blood throughout the body, to promote healing, and stimulate the growth of new cells, as well as the immune system. Use for problems such as chronic joint pain, respiratory problems, allergies, sinus infections, bronchitis, urinary tract infections, and intestinal inflammation.

Make a paste and apply topically to wounds, cuts, burns, and hot spots. Paste can also be applied to fingertips or gauze and used for tooth and gum infections.

A poultice made will neutralize insect bites.

*Because enzymes thin the blood and help prevent clotting some experts warn enzyme supplements be stopped 7-10 days before and after surgery. Then resume usage to speed healing.

*When the diet cannot be balanced with natural foods to provide vitamin and mineral requirements, it is necessary to supplement with a vitamin-mineral preparation. Excessive amounts of most vitamins and minerals are not harmful. Consult your holistic veterinarian.

Disclaimer: these practices don't take the place of veterinary care.