

## Alternative Health Care for Your Best Friend

# The Complete Natural Health Care Guide For Dogs



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# 1

## WHY DO DOGS GET SICK?



Caring for a pet has been scientifically proven to alleviate loneliness and depression, reduce illness, lower the risk of heart disease, relieve stress and help recover from illness and surgery. What could be better than that? What could give your life and heart such an enormous boost of joie de vivre?

Pets also act as prevention against illness. It seems that pet owners visit the doctor less often, have lower blood pressure, experience less sleeping difficulties (unless they share their bed with four dogs who hog covers) and are in better health than non-pet owners.

There is actually a German study that indicates pet owners make 16 per cent fewer visits to the doctor annually and spend 21 per cent fewer days in hospital than non-pet owners.

A National Opinion Poll surveying General Practitioners in the UK supports an Australian study that found a four-legged friend is the best cure for an illness.

Let's face it; the benefits of people having a relationship with an animal are borne out in the tons of evidence in scientific journals that show recovery rates for people who have had heart attacks are much quicker for people who own pets. It's the love factor, the caring, the sharing, the giving and the unconditional acceptance you get from your pet that literally "makes your life better every day!"

Pets are noted to have a therapeutic effect on people with depression and ill health and can also improve the circumstances that lead to depression and ill health. Having a dog at your side also lets you have contact with more people, something that can be very therapeutic.

The bottom line is that pets are the key to our hearts. They provide love, joy, laughter, entertainment, commitment, comic relief, solace, friendship, caring, loyalty and just plain LOVE. Why wouldn't we want our canine companions to receive the very best of everything? They mean the whole world to us. Dogs are not our whole life but dogs make our lives whole. If they are sick, then we want to get to the bottom of why and do something about it.

There really is no easy answer to why dogs get sick, since it could be a combination of things causing your beloved pet to be ill. You may have tried many therapies, drugs, and many trips to the Veterinarian, but still have no answers that satisfy you. You may have spent hours upon hours on the Internet and talking to other dog owners and your dog's breeder to find out what may be wrong with your dog. You have heard all the stories you care to hear about this drug and therapy and that drug and therapy.

You have seen the results of some of the conventional treatments (some that worked and some that didn't) used for dogs and are wondering, "Isn't there anything else I can try to help my dog?" And that is when you turn to alternative medicine – the homeopathic, natural, herbal, and other remedies approach. Whether or not you use the alternative of choice exclusively or use it in conjunction with conventional vet treatments is up to you. The main thing is you do what you need to do for YOUR DOG and his health and welfare. Period.

As wonderful as it may be to have a one hundred percent for certain answer as to WHY your dog gets sick, there is likely not going to be one. However, having said that, there are several major things that could contribute to your pet being ill.

Diet is crucial, so crucial we can't emphasize it enough and even though dogs are classified as omnivores, they are inherently carnivorous. They NEED protein and calcium and have short digestive tracts and teeth designed to rip and tear food. They do not crush food like humans. They have no enzymes in their saliva, their jaws are on a hinge allowing only the jaw to move up and down (not sideways) and the back of the throat has a large opening for swallowing big chunks of food. Dogs require certain amino acids that are readily available in animal sources, but not plant sources. These are primarily taurine and L-carnitine.

This means the protein they are fed must be easily digestible. Since we humans are responsible for our canine partners, we need to understand their needs and how those needs relate to their health and wellness.

One of the things you really need to be doing is reading the label on your dog food cans and dry food. When grains or other plants are listed as the main sources of protein this will indicate essential amino acids are apt to be missing from the diet. Not only that, but plant proteins in commercial dog food are highly indigestible, as they have been destroyed in the process of making the feed. The digestive enzymes and bacteria found in fresh food help dogs digest food better, and build stronger immune systems.

Feeding scraps from the table is not recommended either, as they are high in fat and deficient in nutrients. What your dog needs is a full range of proper nutrients in the right amounts in an easily digestible format for their short digestive tracts.

If you're running for your bag of dog food right now, that's good, you are interested enough in the health and nutrition of your dog to know that what they eat is vitally important to their overall health. When in doubt about what you are feeding, make sure to ask an expert or do your own research online.

Let's get back to the table scraps for just a moment, as there were likely a few raised eyebrows from the folks who do feed table scraps. There is an enormous difference between good quality leftovers and "scraps". The quality leftovers are the pieces of steak (trimmed of fat), roast beef, chicken or turkey. Adding this to your pup's dinner bowl is cause for joy in caninedom, only when done IN MODERATION. In addition leftover pasta and rice are also a welcome addition, so long as they are minus the butter or other fatty sauces and are plainly cooked. The other thing you need to remember is to not over feed the scraps on a continuous basis. A diet too high in fat will cause stomach upsets, diarrhea and other potentially serious gastrointestinal disorders such as pancreatitis which can be life threatening.

### **IF YOU'RE GONNA DO THE SCRAPS ROUTINE – HERE'S WHAT NOT TO FEED**

Onions and garlic contain a toxic ingredient called thiosulphate. Garlic in small amounts – for instance 1 teaspoon in a large batch of dog biscuits will do no harm. Large amounts of garlic are dangerous. Onions however are the greatest danger.

All forms of onion are a problem including dehydrated onions, raw onions, cooked onions and table scraps containing cooked onions and/or garlic. Left over pizza, Chinese dishes and commercial baby food containing onion, sometimes fed as a supplement to young pets, can cause illness. Poisoning occurs a few days after your dog has eaten the onion.

Onion toxicity causes haemolytic anaemia, in which the red blood cells burst while circulating in your dog's body. Symptoms include Hemolytic Anemia, labored breathing, liver damage, vomiting, diarrhea, discolored urine.

Mushroom toxicity can be fatal if certain species of mushrooms are eaten. But to be safe and not sorry, avoid feeding mushrooms at all. The Amanita phalloides is the most severely toxic species of mushroom in the US but other Amanita species are toxic as well. Symptoms include abdominal pain, drooling, liver damage, kidney damage, vomiting diarrhea, convulsions, coma, and death.

As few as a handful of raisins or grapes can make a dog ill, however it is usually larger amounts that cause the following - vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and lethargy. How a dog responds to what it has eaten is a very individual thing and to be safe, just do not feed what you have doubts about. Or follow the rule: "When in doubt – don't!"

Macadamia nuts are another concern, along with most other kinds of nuts due to the high phosphorus content that can lead to bladder stones. Dogs develop a tremor of the skeletal muscles, and weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters. Affected dogs are often unable to rise and go into hard panting. Affected dogs have swollen limbs and show pain when the limbs are manipulated. Some dogs have been known to go into anaphylaxis from ingesting nuts. A dangerous life threatening condition where their breathing passages swell shut.

Bones from fish, poultry, or other meat sources can cause obstruction or laceration of the digestive system. You do not ever want to try and retrieve a bone out of the throat of your choking dog.

Cat Food is something dearly loved by most self-respecting canines. Seems it tastes better to them. And it would, because it is higher in fats and proteins and specially formulated for CATS, not dogs.

Milk and other dairy products should not be fed to adult dogs simply because many do not have sufficient amounts of the enzyme lactase, which breaks down the lactose in milk. This can result in diarrhea. Lactose-free milk products are available for pets.

Raw Eggs contain an enzyme called avidin, which decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin). This can lead to skin and hair coat problems. Raw eggs may also contain Salmonella.

Raw Fish is quite well loved by most dogs, however it can result in a thiamine (a B vitamin) deficiency leading to loss of appetite, seizures, and in severe cases, death. More common if raw fish is fed regularly.

Certainly there are other foods you should not be feeding your dog, but we can't cover all of them. Some of this is a matter of pure common sense. If you want your dog to be healthy, then feed them healthy foods. If that means homemade and additional supplements, or a commercial diet with some scraps or a combination of both, then follow the rules of nutrition for a well and healthy dog.

## **THE COMMERCIAL FOOD FOOFORALL**

Commercial food is convenient and for the most part nutritious. However, it isn't always the best diet for your pal either. Even if you feed the latest, greatest and the best on the market, it still lacks in variety. You are feeding the same food at least twice a day and over many years. If you ate the same meal three times a day for years on end, you would be lacking something in your diet as well. Aside from the boredom factor, you would get sick of what you eat – and may even become sick because of what you eat.

Variety is the spice of life and in the case of what you feed your dog, this couldn't be a truer saying. Variety provides an adequate supply of vitamins, minerals and other healthy components. In fact, you will find many Vets and nutritionists advocating switching brands of food every couple of months or so. Now this may work with some dogs, but with others it causes gastro problems, and not just if you introduce it too quickly. It may cause problems because the formulation of that particular food just doesn't agree with your dog's digestive tract. For instance, German Shepherds tend to have rather finicky stomachs and it's sometimes hard to find something they can tolerate AND still get adequate nutrition.

Something else you need to be aware of when you are buying and feeding commercially prepared dog food. There have been instances where the quality of the ingredients has been sacrificed to lower production costs. Witness the melamine fiasco within the last two years. Consumers believed they were feeding their pets healthy foods, but were actually feeding inferior meat meals, cheap grains (including corn and soy), fillers, by-products, pesticides, preservatives and toxins. More than 5,600 products by dozens of pet food makers were recalled, from chain supermarket brands to prescription-only foods.

Aside from the above distressing discovery that cost thousands of dogs and cats their lives (and made thousands of others very ill), you will hear stories about ingredients not suitable for human consumption being included in dog food. Processing also destroys nutrients causing some vitamins and fatty acids to become unstable when exposed to heat or not stored properly. Heat can also affect the digestibility of some types of proteins. What a nightmare right?

THE most disturbing thing about what is in commercially prepared dog food is the preservatives and "other" additives used to extend their shelf life. For instance, BHA (Butylated Hydroxyanisole - A white, waxy phenolic antioxidant used to preserve fats and oils), BHT (Butylated Hydroxy Toluene - a white, synthetic antioxidant, used as an additive in foods, fuels, and rubber etc. and ethoxyquin.

Ethoxyquin is the most controversial ingredient and not only are our animals eating this, but so are we in spices to prevent color loss due to oxidation of the natural carotenoid pigments. Ethoxyquin is used as a food preservative and a PESTICIDE. It is commonly used as a preservative in pet foods to prevent the food from going rancid. More specifically, to stop the fats from going rancid. Some pet foods have even been found to contain Pentobarbital, which is a chemical used to euthanize animals.

There has been speculation that ethoxyquin might be responsible for certain health problems in your pet(s). If it were your dog though, ask yourself this question. Would YOU want to be feeding your dog a pesticide (sold under the name Stop Scald) two or more times a day for years? Wouldn't you be concerned about the build up of this chemical in their livers? Not much wonder why some of our animals get sick is it?

## **WHAT'S LEFT IN TERMS OF DIET?**

Pretty much home-prepared dog foods based on whole foods. Squeamish about this? It's good that you approach a "different" idea with caution and check it out as well as you would check out commercial food diets. More and more these days you see companies producing ready-made frozen meals for dogs that are mostly based on raw feeding theories. Find out if it is a healthy alternative for a happy dog.

It's really not so far fetched (pardon the dog humor) to think about dogs eating whole foods. They did this in the wild before man domesticated them. Yes the foods were what you'd call fresh from the source – or live on the hoof. But they were NOT processed and NOT chemically altered. So it makes good logical sense that a dog diet built around whole foods can offer your pup high quality nutrition. Think variety in your dog's food – meats, fruits and vegetables. If you go organic, then you don't have the worry about chemicals either.

### **STILL WONDERING WHETHER THE FOOD YOU FEED MAKES A DIFFERENCE?**

Just so you know, here are some of the problems you can expect to encounter if you are feeding your dog a low quality diet – the "cheaper is better and goes further" kind of diet. The commercial dry food that lists grains as the first ingredient and it's hard to even find the word "meat" on the label.

You will KNOW you have likely a problem with your dog food when your dog has some of the following symptoms:

- Voluminous stools that can be watery or very loose and even to the point of diarrhea.
- Compromised immune system
- Skin bumps that appear to be hives or an allergic reaction
- Dull eyes
- Bad breath
- Vomiting
- Spontaneous regurgitation as in spitting up stomach contents, not vomiting
- Refusal to eat the food
- Attempts to bury the food
- Has gas and expels it frequently and it is foul smelling
- Brown teeth
- Burps excessively
- Sheds excessively

As you can clearly tell from this list, if eating the wrong kind of food does this to a dog in the short-term, imagine what it would do in the long-term. Any of the conditions listed above can also develop into other problems for your dog. Why let them eat food that shortens their life span? On the other side of the coin, if you do feed them food that is healthy and gives them what they need, you will see the reverse of all the symptoms you just read about. Now wouldn't it be nice to have minimal well-formed stool to pick up and not have to inhale odiferous contributions to the thinning of the ozone layer? (among other things)

Really, this area is filled with landmines on both sides of the fence. Proponents of commercial dog food versus homemade fare can be quite adamant about their respective positions. The best thing you can do is to be fully informed, do your own research, try various commercial dog foods (go for the premium brands chock full of all the good nutrition your dog needs) and see if they work for you and for your dog. Always read labels, ask questions, talk to other dog owners, and ask your Vet. You will be able to find something that works for your dog.

## **A WORD ABOUT WATER**

Water is the most essential ingredient of ALL for your dog. Almost any function that occurs within your dog's body has some dependency on water. Very little water is stored in your dog's body, and if not given water, he would die in a very short period of time. Fact: if a dog loses one tenth of his water, he will die. That means, just to give you an example, an average sized dog of about 40 pounds must drink more than a liter/quart of water every day. Half of this will come from his food and he will drink the rest. So, if you are only feeding dry dog food, then your dog must drink more to meet his daily intake needs.

Water is a solvent and the main component of blood. It is the transportation method for blood, nutrients, antibodies and waste. Water is also a thermo regulator. It handles heat loss due to evaporation and the removal of heat from internal organs to the skin surface. It's also critical for digestion and urine production.

It's been proven scientifically that dogs will drink roughly ten times a day, which is why you will always see on labels of dog food the strong suggestion that fresh water be available at all times. You may not realize this, but more than 70 percent of your dog's total body weight is water. Despite this percentage, your dog's daily needs will vary depending on the weather and how active he is. An active dog in hot weather drinks more. A dog sick with fever, diarrhea or kidney disease also drinks more.

Although you may not have thought about this, it does make a difference how hot or cold the water is that you are giving your dog. Too warm or too cold discourages some dogs from drinking what they need. And how would you know if he isn't getting enough water? Check his stools. They would be dry, hard and smell terrible. If he continues to not get enough water, he would show signs of dehydration which can be life threatening.

Never underestimate the value of good, clean, fresh water. If your water source isn't fit for humans to consume, then it isn't fit for your dog either. And as we all know, these days even the water we drink is coming under scrutiny for the chemicals and other bacteria in it. Can you make a difference to your dog's life span, health and well-being? Absolutely!

## 2

# HISTORY OF HOMOEOPATHIC ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES FOR DOGS



3

The history of homeopathic medicine is really fascinating and you could literally spend hours on the Internet reading about it. But because we want you to know more about homeopathy and other alternative remedies for your dog, we will give you the "what you need to know" part so you get an idea of how homeopathic medicine is intended to work. We'll also cover several other areas in this chapter such as Acupuncture, Bach Flower Remedies and Australian Bush Flower Essences to name but a few of the many other available alternative remedies for dogs.



## **A QUICK WORD ABOUT NATURAL HOMEOPATHIC/HERBAL REMEDIES AND HOW THEY RELATE TO YOUR DOG**

As you read further along in this chapter you will notice that the **WHOLE** dog is considered for treatment when these kinds of remedies are used. That means his mental, emotional, psychological, and environmental self and how he relates to his world and his surroundings.

The **KEY** to natural homeopathic medicines/herbal remedies is to get the right herb or herbs or homeopathic remedy selected for **YOUR** dog and his condition and then to set the dose or choose a course of therapy for **YOUR** dog. In other words each dog is different, each dose is different and each herb etc. chosen may also be different.

This is why you will **NOT** find specific doses given in this book, because we cannot with any degree of guaranteed accuracy, give you a specific herb or dose for **YOUR** dog. What we can do is give you ideas of what you can try and what may work. In all cases, consult with a veterinarian about homeopathic/herbal remedies.

**To find a holistic/alternative medicine veterinarian in your country use the websites below.** They will find you practitioners from Canada to the UK and from Australia to the USA and other countries in between.

This is the Open Directory project and offers quite comprehensive listings with just a few clicks.

You can locate those specializing in animal acupuncture, aromatherapy, animal Chinese medicine, chiropractors, energy healers, herbalists, homeopaths, massage therapists, animal nutritionist, oxygen therapists, physical therapists and hydrotherapists and essence therapists for animals.

[http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Animal/Alternative\\_Medicine/Practitioners/](http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Animal/Alternative_Medicine/Practitioners/)

For the USA you can also use this site offered by the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association

<http://www.holisticvetlist.com/>

Or this site offered by the Veterinary Institute of Integrative Medicine

<http://www.viim.org/findvets/vetlist.asp>

You can also visit the following other sites to search for members worldwide in acupuncture

The International Veterinary Acupuncture Society

<http://www.ivas.org>

The American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture

<http://aava.org>

The American Veterinary Chiropractic Association

<http://www.avca.com>

The Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy

<http://www.theavh.com>

## **HOMEOPATHIC HISTORY**

The founder of homeopathic medicine in the early 1800s was Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) The good doctor earned his medical degree in Germany in 1779 at a time when the prevailing method of treating some ill people was to use purgatives, bleeding, blistering plasters, herbal preparations and emetics. Hahnemann regarded this as more harmful than helpful. Not one to be shy about his opinion, he wrote several articles indicating such treatments lacked any rational basis.

While translating the Materia Medica (a scientific study of medicinal drugs and their sources, preparation, and use) into German, Hahnemann was intrigued by a passage that dealt with cinchona bark used to treat malaria. The way it acted on the body was as a function of its stomach-strengthening properties. Hahnemann thought that was hogwash, and promptly ingested the Peruvian bark, twice a day for several days to attempt to understand the actual action of the quinine-containing bark.

What subsequently happened is he began to develop symptoms identical to those produced with malaria. His conclusion? His conclusion was that effective drugs must produce symptoms in healthy people similar to the diseases they are expected to treat. This is called the Law of Similars and the basis for the term homeopathy (similar suffering). A principle that says the use of certain substances can create symptoms of disease to fight disease when given in minute doses.

Encouraged by what he felt was an important discovery, he and some of his colleagues tested various other substances to figure out the types of symptoms they produced. The results then gave Hahnemann the idea of what the drugs would be useful to treat. He felt he should not use full strength doses of these substances to treat diseases with the same symptoms. That is how he hit upon reducing the dose to infinitesimal levels through a series of multiple dilutions of ten to a hundred fold. He ground insoluble materials with lactose and diluted soluble compounds with liquids or alcohol. The end results of his work were published in the Organon of Rational Therapeutics in 1810. Interestingly enough the sixth edition that came out in 1921 is still in use today as the homeopathic practitioner's basic text.

As with any "discovery" at first it enjoys its day in the sun. That wasn't hard given homeopathy's competition of the 1800's – the allopathic torture routines described earlier in this chapter. By comparison, homeopathy had a great deal of success. That caused people to take notice and start touting its effectiveness.

However, by the early twentieth century, homeopathy was not in as much favor as it used to be. The last pure homeopathic medical school in the USA closed in 1920. The Hahnemann Medical School in Philadelphia however did offer homeopathic electives until the 1940's. It wasn't until the 1970's that homeopathy began to come back into its own element as people took a greater interest in holistic and natural approaches to medicine. Naturally people began to wonder if homeopathy could help them, could it also help their companion animals?

### **HOMEOPATHY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN AROUND EVEN LONGER THAN THE 1800'S**

Let's step back even a bit further into history to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Greek physician Hippocrates thought two methods could be helpful in the treatment of illnesses. He postulated if he used substances that counteracted a disease, he could treat things like diarrhea with a remedy that caused constipation. He also felt he could fight evil with the same evil. In other words, he used substances that caused the exact symptoms presented by the illness he was treating in a healthy person.

Paracelsus (a Roman encyclopedist from the first century known for his tract on medicine) also came to these astonishing conclusions. Born Phillip von Hohenheim, he later took up the name Philippus Theophrastus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim, and still later went with Paracelsus, meaning "equal to or greater than Aulus Cornelius Celsus."

As you can see, the basis for homeopathy was born a long time ago and practiced over the centuries as being a viable alternative to the prevailing regular medicine being practiced.

### **RE-VISITING THE LAW OF SIMILARS IN MORE DEPTH**

To get a little better idea of the foundation of homeopathy and what it involves, we need to take a quick stroll down the philosophical path of homeopathy. To illustrate the point here, think conventional medicine and that when you have symptoms of a disease, those symptoms are present because of the disease. You get drugs to kill bacteria or to lessen the symptom of your condition.

Now, think homeopathy. Homeopaths see symptoms as your body's efforts to heal itself. That the natural defense mechanism is trying to fight the underlying cause of your illness. Following this line of reasoning, homeopaths maintain symptoms ought not to be suppressed or we are working against the body's efforts to cure itself. Homeopaths follow laws, called the laws of similars, the principle of minimum dose and whole person/canine prescribing and the laws of cure.

## **THE LAW OF SIMILARS**

Basically, the Law of Similars simply means that like shall be cured by like – embodied in the Latin phrase Similia similibus curantur. This foundation principle of homeopathy says that the proper remedy for a patient's disease is that substance that is capable of producing, in a healthy person, symptoms similar to those from which the patient suffers. Interesting ramifications don't you think?

Taking this line of reasoning one step further, if a substance produces symptoms of an illness in a well person when administered in large doses – if this same substance is given to a sick person, but in smaller quantities, it will cure the disease. The rationale for that line of reasoning? Nature would not allow two similar diseases to co-exist in the body at the same time. What homeopaths do then is introduce a very small dose of a similar artificial disease that will (in theory) push out the original illness. Which leads us next to something called the Principle of Minimum Dose.

## **THE PRINCIPLE OF MINIMUM DOSE**

The Principle of Minimum Dose says extreme dilution (of an artificial disease) intensifies the medicinal properties of a substance, while eradicating any possible side effects. Here is how this works. A homeopath starts with a conventional dose of a drug, but decreases the concentration by increasing the dilution. This makes the medicine less efficient until it reaches a certain threshold when it starts getting potent again. This is the region homeopaths work in.

## **WHOLE PERSON/CANINE PRESCRIBING**

A homeopath studies the whole person or the whole canine. Characteristics such as their temperament, personality, and emotional and physical responses when being examined are studied. This close scrutiny by the way also includes the environment in which your dog (or you) live and how you handle everything from stress to joy. This is referring to the mind/body connection that homeopaths (and other treatment modalities) insist is crucial to your well-being. This is the same for your dog. Healthy mind - healthy body. If you have a different mind/body connection from your neighbor (or the Rottweiler down the street) you each may get a different "prescription" for the same illness.

## **LAWS OF CURE**

The three laws of cure are that a remedy starts at the top of the body and works down. A remedy works from within the body outward and from major to minor organs and that symptoms will clear in reverse order of appearance. So this would mean you will feel better emotionally before you feel better physically. Just stretch this a bit and apply it to you dog as well. As canines do have feelings and experience emotions, you may then expect your best buddy to show signs of emotional recovery before their physical recovery.

## **ACUPUNCTURE – A COMPONENT OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE**

In case you are not familiar with what acupuncture is, it is the use of small-gauge needles along various points on the body (human or canine) to elicit physiological responses. Acupuncture can be used to treat almost any disease or condition, and it seems to be particularly useful for pain relief. Traditional Chinese medicine uses acupuncture to treat whole-body conditions.

History is rather vague on when acupuncture actually came into being, but it is known that a type of primitive acupuncture (like) therapy was practiced over 7,000 years ago in India. Fishbone needles were actually even used in China 5,000 years ago. Many of the "patients" of that time were stone-age humans, and it wasn't until 3,000 years ago that records show veterinary acupuncture was used in India on elephants. Having said that, the acknowledged father of veterinary acupuncture is Shun Yang (480 BC) of China. So you can see, it is a venerable therapy modality that has experienced favorable results over thousands of years on humans and animals.

Acupuncture was used for many illnesses over the years, but fell into disfavor in the 1940s, thanks to antibiotics that promised to treat specific ailments. Then in 1973 it was declared an experimental medical procedure. Acupuncture was endorsed by the American Osteopathic Association in 1983 as a component of medical practice. With this endorsement, fewer and fewer people thought of acupuncture as something quacks did. It started to become a valuable "partner" to other medical procedures in both humans and animals. Would you believe many major Vet textbooks now have sections devoted to acupuncture? At last rough count, over 3 million Vets and medical practitioners, assistants and pharmacists are trained in this ancient Chinese medicine art. By the way, the numbers break down into over 150,000 Vets that are trained in this healing modality.

## **A BIT ABOUT HOW ACUPUNCTURE WORKS**

In Traditional Chinese medicine animals and humans are looked at as being small parts of a large and infinite universe, a universe that is subject to laws that govern all living and non-living things. If an animal or human follows these laws of nature, they will have good health. Again, this is definitely not viewed as a stand-alone procedure. It is a part of a larger medical system that also offers moxibustion (the burning of moxa, derived from mugwort or common wormwood, a soft downy material, on the skin in the treatment of various disorders), massage, breathing exercises, nutrition, and herbal medicine among other things. Okay you don't do breathing exercises with dogs, but you get the idea.

The practitioner aims to diagnose any imbalance in the life force (the Qi – pronounced key), figure out the cause of the imbalance (the disease) and remove the causes (the treatment). You may already have some familiarity with the terms yin and yang – the two polarities of Qi. Acupuncture "talks" to organs and tissues through the meridians, (energy pathways) of the body. In other words, the sum of the whole body is greater than its parts.

## **HIGH TOUCH JIN SHIN ACUPRESSURE**

This self-healing art comes from natural medicine practices in Japan. It's a gentle and non-invasive therapy that shares many similar concepts with acupuncture, but no needles are used. The practitioner performs an energetic pulse assessment to find areas of imbalance that are not necessarily obvious. The practitioner then works on certain meridians or acupressure points to rebalance the body's energy.

There is also acupressure sound wave therapy done with a machine. The sound waves travel along the body's meridians, and release toxins and reduce swelling or inflammation, which relieves pain. It stimulates various acupressure points (just like acupuncture). For instance, acupuncture can relieve pain in one part of the body by stimulating an acupuncture point elsewhere, acupressure sound waves stimulate acupressure points and achieve the same results without the use of needles.

## **MASSAGE**

Massage Therapy works on the muscles, the lymphatic system, and the cardiovascular system. In addition, it helps with respiration, digestion and elimination. Your dog loves this because it feels great and can also decrease recovery time from an injury, increase range of motion and muscle tone, help your dog relax and also detoxify his system.

## **BOWEN THERAPY**

The goal of Bowen therapy is to balance and empower your dog's own healing resources and to help his structural, functional and over-all well-being.

This therapy utilizes a series of gentle, non-invasive connective tissue manipulations applied to key points on the animal's body. Most of the work done with this therapy is focused on connective tissue known as fascia. Fascia is a continuous membrane-like plastic wrap that covers every organ, blood vessel, nerve, muscle and bone throughout the whole body. Fascia should be loose, moist, mobile and elastic, facilitating movement between the parts of the body and the flow of bodily fluids throughout the body.

## **REFLEXOLOGY**

Regarded as another natural healing art, reflexology stimulates the reflexes throughout the body. For instance the foot of a dog and a human have the same bones. The crook in your dog's leg (hock) is a calcaneus bone of the human heel. The basic theory here is that (and this is the same premise for humans) the whole body is mapped out on the feet. Stimulating these various areas helps your body heal.

## **REIKI**

The word Reiki (pronounced Ray-Key) is a Japanese kanji for universal life-force energy. Reiki is a Japanese holistic, light-touch, energy-based modality that is simple and produces measurable results. Working as a support mechanism to the body, Reiki re-establishes a normal flow of ki (life-force energy) throughout the system, which in turn can enhance and accelerate the body's innate healing ability. Through a series of hand positions either directly on or just above the body, the Reiki practitioner allows for the flow of energy through the body. The client's body then draws off the amount of energy that is required.

The practitioner's hands remain in a stationary position, gently on or slightly above the body through several positions from head to toe. There is no manipulation of the skin or tissue. Reiki is not a massage. In some, chronic or acute pain can diminish or completely vanish. Sometimes allergies and other infirmities completely disappear. It is different for each person/animal.

## **IRIDOLOGY**

Iridology is relatively new in terms of use on dogs, but it is making gigantic inroads as another alternative to help your dog live a healthy life. Iridology is the analysis of the colors, textures and markings of the iris. Interestingly enough in cats and dogs, the iris is very similar to the human iris. Areas of the body have been mapped as corresponding to locations in the iris through hundreds of years of iridology practice.

Iridology does not and cannot diagnose disease. But it can pinpoint/see weakness in certain areas, or note levels of deterioration or excess toxins that indicate a certain disease is present or developing. Basically the practitioner addresses imbalances in the body and once it is back in balance, the sickness should no longer exist.

## **HERBAL MEDICINE**

This is an area that is still under development, with the main hang up being research. Not many companies are too thrilled about spending a lot of money on researching herbs because most of them can't be patented. They aren't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration either, definitely an area of controversy for humans and animals.

Many of the drugs we use today on humans and animals are actually compounds considered to be the active principles in herbs. Herbalists though feel the pharmaceutical derivatives and the whole plant they came are not the same. In this case, the whole is more than the sum of its parts, due to synergisms that may occur both within the plant and within the body.

It's tough to find fresh herbs, and they often don't taste that great to your canine friend. Yes there are herb combination products developed for certain syndromes, and they are distributed as tablets and capsules. You can find them on the market generally classified as Western Herbs or Chinese Herbs. Chinese herbal combinations have been

around for thousands of years and have a long track record. When dabbling in this area, remember just because it is herbal does not mean it is harmless. Always check with your Vet if you are giving your dog herbal remedies as they may interfere with other medications your dog may be on.

## **ESSENTIAL OIL THERAPY FOR ANIMALS**

The premise behind essential oil therapy for animals is when our dog smells them, it absorbs the essential oil (chemical constituents) into the brain via the olfactory system. Smell is connected to the limbic system, which is the seat of emotion, memory and other body regulatory functions. We know our emotional state influences our physical state, and this is the same with our dogs. So, then the essential oils are inhaled they trigger neuro-transmitters that reduce things that pain, or they will sedate, stimulate or calm an anxious dog.

Essential oils work on the emotional and physical level at the same time. For instance if you use an essential oil for an angry skin lesion, it will also calm the nerves. Bet you've noticed that when a physical condition that has been bothering your dog clears up, there is a very noticeable change in his disposition.

How do you use essential oils on animals? Traditionally oils are blended and then massaged into the skin. Hard to do with all the fur isn't it? Well this is really quite fascinating, but the premise is that the animals instinctively know what they need to heal. Oils are then chosen based on a detailed history of your animal and an analysis of its character and habits.

Next kinesiology (the scientific study of the anatomy, physiology, and mechanics of body movement) is used to help select the right combination of oils. They are then diluted to a 1% solution in a base of vegetable or infused herb oil. Each essential oil is offered individually to the animal to smell (at least 6 inches from his nose), not more than three oils at a time for dogs and cats.

Evidently if the animal does need the oil it will either smell it intently, or want to lick the oil bottle. If they do want to lick the bottle, a tiny amount of oil is dabbed on the hand and the animal is allowed to lick it off. This would then be repeated once or twice more during the day judging by the level of interest your pet shows. When they turn away from the oil you can stop offering it. This process takes anywhere from one day to several months. On average though it usually takes five days to two weeks. The fascinating thing about this is that by letting the animal control what it needs, they have shown that less is more in their healing process. Often just the smell of the particular oil will start the healing process for them. Be aware that even though oils are natural substances they are very potent and can be toxic if not used properly. And again, essential oil therapy is not a substitute for Vet care. Always consult with your Vet first and continue from there.



## **VIBRATIONAL MEDICINE**

This is quite an exciting area and a new one based in the healing power of crystals. Whether or not you believe in the powers of crystal healing, this is one therapy that will NOT hurt your pet in any way. Matter of fact, neither will any of these other alternative therapies. And of course it goes without saying that any of these forms of medicine should be used in partnership with traditional Vet care.

For thousands of years, even since the time of the fabled Atlantis, minerals have been used in various forms to heal. They are featured prominently in homeopathic remedies, where the crystals/minerals are diluted and potentized (to render the available power of the crystal).

Pure uncut crystals, particularly clear quartz, is used to store and release energy and to facilitate healing. Other minerals such as gemstones have healing properties, and have been worn through the centuries (YES – even by animals) for the benefit of the wearer, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Different gemstones were used in ancient Egypt to balance the bodies of humans and animals, to balance chakras and cure various diseases. Gem elixirs were commonly used, (similar to homeopathic preparations and flower essences in preparation), but differ subtly on an energy level. Minerals were used in the form of various creams and ointments, and applied to the body directly. Healing with minerals was also used in the treatment of animals in ancient Babylon, Native America, China, India, and Greece. It's no surprise then that the development of a topical cream to assist healing and remove pain, is starting to make a come back now. It has a track record back to ancient times, and has been used in various forms.

These remedies we are talking about - homeopathic remedies, flower essences and gemstones - all work on the energy of the body. What they do is affect our vital force in various ways. It's not just the energy that is involved in these healing modalities. Animals and people are also made up of electromagnetic energy and can be affected by the energy of the mineral in various ways. This is why minerals have been used to heal in the form of homeopathic remedies, gem elixirs, ingested powders, and have also been used topically, and applied to the body in the form of various pastes and powders. When applied specifically to the chakra system or to acupuncture points, the healing effects can be amplified and used to enhance the healing process, and bring about balance to the body.

## **BACH FLOWER REMEDIES**



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The creator of Bach Flower Remedies, Edward Bach was born in Moseley, near Birmingham, in 1886 and trained as a doctor in London, qualifying in 1912. One of his main interests was how bacteria played a role in chronic diseases. Over the course of his studies he concluded there were clear personality types that related to the various patterns of illness no matter what physical symptoms were present.

As he continued his research he began working with vaccine therapy and then homeopathic remedies and principles. While working with homeopathy he started experiments with flower remedies and developed his first three remedies in 1928, a further 6 remedies in 1930, two more in 1931 and the last of 12 healers as he called them in 1931. His excitement was in the fact that flowers could help harmonize emotional imbalances in people (and animals) that he was convinced was the real cause of physical illness.

Even though Bach did practice homeopathy for many years, he eventually gave up using one of the main cornerstones of that therapy – nosodes, the use of the actual disease to treat a disease. (Fight like with like, evil with evil) He came to the conclusion that remedies from the fields and meadows were positive in polarity when potentized and using bacteria to fight bacteria rendered negative polarity.

Since life is about harmony and being in tune, using a disease to fight a disease is not vibrating in unison. Bach eventually found there were 12 groups or states of mind that he related to the karmic lessons people were to work through during their lives, hence the 12 remedies. (The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies)

Each flower Bach worked with was found to personify the positive and harmonizing force of a negative emotional state. He prepared essences from the flowers and used them

in a diluted form as medicine. The results? That when negative moods were exposed to the essences, the sick person/animal started to get better.

Firmly convinced that he needed to treat the whole body and that included the mental, physical and emotional states, he believed a person was much more than the outward physical body treated by conventional medicine. Illness is a message from our inner being calling for a change in our way of living and our mental outlook. Flower remedies help us change and bring us back to a happy experience of life. These remedies have been in use throughout the world since Bach's death in 1936.

## **CHIROPRACTIC THERAPY FOR DOGS**

If you've ever had your back out of whack and been to a Chiropractor then you know how good you feel when you have things back in place where they are supposed to be. Our dogs (and other animals) can benefit from this kind of therapy as well. The benefits? Increased flexibility, enhanced quality of life, and improved health. Chiropractic also offers treatment alternatives for a variety of conditions commonly treated with drugs and surgery.

Chiropractic medicine deals with the relationship between the spinal column and the nervous system and the crucial role of this relationship to the maintenance of overall health.

Your dog's spine is made up of moveable bones called vertebrae. There are seven cervical (neck), thirteen thoracic (upper and mid back), seven lumbar (loin), three fused sacral, and six to twenty-three coccygeal vertebrae.

Vertebrae in the spinal column help support the head and provide attachment points for the muscles that let your dog walk, etc. The basic movements of the vertebral column are extension (straightening of the spine); flexion (dorsal arching of the spine); lateral flexion (bowing to the right or left side); and rotation.

The vertebrae also protect the spinal cord, which runs through a canal in the center of the vertebrae, and the 36 pairs of spinal nerve roots, which exit the cord in the intervertebral spaces. These nerve roots are the connecting structure between the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and the peripheral nerves. For instance, adapting to temperature changes, digesting a meal, responding to a stressful situation, running, and obeying a command are examples of nervous system responses.

There are more than 100 joints in the canine spine between the base of the skull and the tail. Each of these joints has a normal range of motion and this is the primary key that keeps your dog balanced and functioning. When a joint can no longer move through its full range of motion, spinal flexibility and mobility are adversely affected.

## **AUSTRALIAN BUSH FLOWER ESSENCES**

You've already read about Bach Flower Remedies, so you can bet this is not exactly a new area. However having said that, although the methodology behind Australian Bush Flower Essences is similar to Bach, the Australian approach has a slightly different history. Australian Aborigines have always used flowers to heal the emotions, as did the Ancient Egyptians.

Sixty years ago the art of healing using flower essences was rediscovered by Dr. Edward Bach. He created his line of essences using English flowering plants. Today Ian White a Naturopath and fifth generation Australian herbalist has created Australian Bush Flower Essences from Australian plants.

White grew up in the Australian bush and learned a profound respect for nature from his grandmother. He went on to become a practitioner and a pioneer working with and researching the rare remedial qualities of Australian native plants. Australia has the world's oldest and highest number of flowering plants. It is considered to be (Australia the continent) relatively unpolluted and metaphysically has a very wise, old energy. Thus these attributes pass on to the plants that grow there.

The Bush Remedies are said to develop a higher level of intuition, self-esteem, spirituality, creativity and fun. The more the Essences are used, the more one is likely to experience greater awareness and happiness and the ability to access the higher self. In so doing, this releases negative beliefs allowing the positive to take precedence. Balance is then restored and healing takes place.

There are other Flower Essences that can be used on humans or animals, each prepared in the Bach sun-infusion manner. The choice is yours on which one you want to try. You can try Findhorn Flower Essences made with Scottish flowers and pure water from sacred healing wells. Or perhaps the oldest flower essence line outside the UK, Master's Flower Essences. These 20 essences are backed by nearly three decades of case studies, testimonials, and research and are prepared from organic fruit trees and vegetable plants by the Bach Flower Remedies method.

There is also South African Flower Essences are made on the slopes of Table Mountain in the Cape of Good Hope. Here the energy leylines (alleged alignments of ancient sites or holy places, such as stone circles, standing stones, cairns, and churches) which run the length of the continent, converge supposedly amplifying and focusing the continental energy. Table Mountain is an enormously powerful energy site and is regarded by many as one of the twelve chakras of the planet.

The Alaskan Flower Essence Project lays claim to being the only essence company in the world to design a system of vibrational healing based on the relationship that exists between the plant, mineral, and elemental kingdoms.

Suffice it to say that if you wish to use flower essences in healing your dog and assisting his well-being, you will have many different essence preparations to try.

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## PROS AND CONS OF NATURAL MEDICINE



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The pros and cons of natural medicine is one area that is literally a loaded landmine for many people. Whether you are a dog owner who wants to try natural medicine, a Vet who practices it, an herbalist who advocates it or a person who has tried it. You ALL have different opinions on the subject. The bottom line for most of you though is "Did it work?" And if the answer to that question is yes it worked, then you are a pro for natural medicine. If natural medicine did not work that well for you, then likely you will be in the con camp. At the end of the day, the only person who can decide if natural medicine works is YOU, and that will depend on what research you have done, how you feel about the answers you got to questions, and if you got results for your canine companion.

What is quite well known is that herbal medicine (natural medicine, phytotherapy, phytomedicine or botanical medicine) is THE most ancient form of health care on the planet. Virtually all cultures have used herbs in some form since the dawn of time. The pull to use natural medicine is so strong and pervasive (for many reasons) that many alternative therapy practitioners will not only use herbs, but naturopathy, ortho-molecular medicine and even Ayurveda, not to mention the other alternative remedies you hear about. And this is often done in conjunction with conventional vet medicine as well. Bottom line though is if you are going to use alternative medicine routes for your dog,

then make sure you see a holistic vet or practitioner. They're your best bet for a definitive natural diagnosis.

Did you know that roughly 25 percent of all prescription drugs are actually derived from trees, shrubs or herbs? Or did you know that the World Health Organization estimates that of 119 plant-derived pharmaceutical medicines, about 74 percent are used in modern medicine? There are an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 plants on earth today. Only about 5,000 of these have been studied for their medicinal applications. So in some ways if you are taking conventional medicine for something, you may well be taking an herbal (natural medicine). Kind of makes you wonder what the rest of the herbs will yield up in terms of healing properties doesn't it? Think about this. Chinese Herbal Medicine is well over 5000 years old, and modern day Western Medicine Pharmacology is less than 80 years old. Antibiotics were discovered in 1928.

The defining line between herbal and conventional is rather blurred to say the least. One other thing you need to remember is most of the prescriptions used as treatments in natural medicine are NOT just one herb for one disorder. They are mixtures of herbs, plant extracts and other organic substances. If you have allergies or sensitivities to herbs or plant extracts, beware, be AWARE and read the labels carefully. If what's in the bottle or preparation does NOT list ALL the ingredients – then don't take it or administer it to anyone you know that has herb or plant sensitivities. And yes, that includes dogs. Speak to your holistic vet about any herbal remedies you are considering. They will be able to put you on the right path and tell you how to properly use the preparation.

Natural medicine and herbal (which includes flower essences etc.) in particular is a booming industry hauling in almost as much money as the pet food industry. And why not? If you stop to take a look at history, you'll find the Native Americans, Romans, Egyptians, Persians and Hebrews used herbs to cure just about every known (and some unknown) illnesses. Did they have success? Evidently they did or the industry wouldn't be flourishing to the extent it is today.

Think about it! You can find herbal remedies in hundreds of forms such as herbal baths, capsules, compresses, douches, electuaries (drug mixed with sugar and water or honey into a pasty mass for oral administration), extracts, implants, oils, poultices and plasters, salves, teas, infusions, ointments, decoctions (an extract from a plant by boiling it in water), essences, lotions, candles, sprays and wraps. Of course along with all these remedies comes the increase in popularity of the therapeutic healing technique as well.

There's a rip-roaring debate about using herbs in their complete form. Should pharmaceutical companies extract the potent ingredients from the herbs and synthesize their own man-made herbs? Or should herbs and plant extracts etc. be prescribed in their purest form. Any highly trained herbalist will tell you they prefer the pure form, and they also insist most herbs are just as effective as drugs, but without the side effects.

Now if you have been following this debate to this point, you'll remember that many of the traditional drugs we take are derived from plants etc. So it's rather of an oxymoron to say most herbs are just as effective as drugs isn't it? It's also rather odd to say most herbs don't have side effects when the whole premise of homeopathy is to treat like with like (evil with evil). Remember the premise of giving a disease a disease to heal?

Giving the herb and its effects etc. to the person with the disease to produce the same symptoms to drive it out. So really, which is it?? Just because you are dealing with an herb does NOT mean it is NOT toxic. Ever heard of deadly nightshade or poisonous mushrooms? These are drugs and must be used with caution, but if they are used properly then they will benefit your canine buddy. Of course your holistic vet or practitioner will be able to tell you immediately what to use and when. For the best natural care for your dog, always consult a holistic vet.

In general it would be perhaps best to say herbs and plant extracts can have reduced side effects. Rule of thumb: if it's bitter-tasting, it's a medicinal herb. If it's pleasant-tasting it's still an herb, and less toxic with the ability to be used longer and more often.

How do herbs work as opposed to traditional medicines? In general, they work in a similar way to antibiotics and other pharmaceutical drugs. Herb medicine is its most beneficial if used to cure chronic diseases, and they take indirect routes to your bloodstream and organs. Drugs on the other hand take the direct routes to start healing.

The thing with herbal medicine/natural medicine seems to be the opinion that herbs/plants/trees/shrubs/flowers (whatever) often haven't been thoroughly tested. Yes there have been studies published, but most of the studies are on animals (which is a benefit to the animal kingdom) but rarely are these done on humans. Certainly not to the extent "provings" were done when Bach was formulating his flower essences. And even then, the "tests" were hardly the rigidly controlled double blind studies called for today.

Search long and hard on the Internet for information on whether or not some of the herbal compounds can cause birth defects (human or animal) and they are as rare as hen's teeth. You will also not find any studies that give any indication if the herbals can cause cancer or how they affect people/animals when given long term. The other thing scientific papers fail to mention when they are available, is where the herbs were grown, a factor that is important when dealing with possible pesticide use, or heavy metal contamination.

Dosage regulation for herbal medicine is difficult and challenging to say the least. A precise drop of this mixed with a drop or four of that and blended with a drop of another something isn't exactly like "Take one pill four times a day." This means getting the precise dose needed is sometimes a hit and miss affair. This is one of the major reasons why dealing with a holistic vet or practitioner will put your dog on the road to recovery quickly. They understand how to use these medicines effectively.

Getting your herbal remedies at a health food store perhaps? Do you think the sales clerk has as much knowledge, experience and training as a licensed, trained herbalist? Would they know what they are talking about? Things to think about if you are trying to help your canine pal. (or yourself) Frankly self-diagnosis for your dog or you is just flat out not a good idea. You could misdiagnose and give the wrong remedy. Always talk to you holistic vet about the proper diagnosis.

It's difficult to get it always right on because the active ingredient in the plants etc. used varies widely from plant to plant. Understand as well that the compound needed from a plant to make an herbal medicine may NOT be the only compound in the plant. The active compound needed may have a dark rider with it, another toxic compound such as

a pyrrolizadine alkaloid (toxic to liver, can cause benign/malignant tumors). It may also have coumarins (decrease ability of blood to clot) and even allergens.

As you know, most traditional medicines are quite clearly labeled as to what is in them, and how to take them properly. Most often they even come with a short information sheet explaining the drug and how it works. This can't be said for herbal remedies. Very few marketed in the US for instance carry both the Latin name and their expiry date. Makes it hard for you to look up on the Internet and do your own research doesn't it? Herbal companies are not required to clearly list their ingredients, nor are they regulated in the US or Canada. That means that bottle you are holding of an herbal product may or may not contain the levels of product they claim. It can also mean that other herbal drug products may be contained in that liquid, pill, or capsule that are not listed in the ingredients. This is why if you consult a holistic vet, you will get the answers you need to know.

Aside from the Materia Medica very few herb books contain dosage information. Largely this is due to the fact that each dose for each person for each disease is different depending on the circumstances. Nonetheless it is frustrating and confusing, not to mention dangerous if you use too much. On the other hand, using too little doesn't accomplish much either. This is actually THE most critical con for using herbal medicines, the skill and training or lack thereof of the person giving the herbs.

And speaking of experience, you could say that is precisely what 5,000 years of medicine is – experience. Even the Materia Medica has mostly remained unchanged for numerous years because it works. This could also be summed up as know your physician (or Veterinarian). Make sure that they are licensed in your state and that they have had good results. Students out of school are actually quite knowledgeable and are also as good a bet as established physicians/veterinarians.

Complementary and alternative are often terms used to describe the use of natural medicines and therapies such as diet, massage and some nutritional supplements used with conventional medicine. Alternative therapies like Naturopathy, homeopathy and Traditional Chinese Medicine etc. are thought by some to replace conventional medicine.

Really a natural therapy/remedy does not need to be labeled as either complementary or alternative simply because most of them can be used with conventional medicine. Nonetheless you will frequently see the acronym CAM, which stands for Complementary and Alternative medicines if you search for herbal medicine/natural medicine in the Internet.

An attractive lure for those who are interested in trying natural remedies is their pricing. They cost a whole lot less than the traditional drugs prescribed by your doctor. And the reason for that is they don't need to be manufactured or developed – they already exist and can be readily harvested – and they are definitely more convenient. You don't need a prescription from your doctor or Veterinarian to use a remedy either, although to be safe and cautious, you really do need to talk to them.

Interestingly enough, another appealing draw for the use of herbal remedies etc. is they sometimes prove to be more effective than traditional medications. This is due to the



fact that they are usually also more potent than traditional drugs, but this does tend to vary depending on what you are using (how and where it was grown and prepared), and what you are using it for.

As you can likely tell by now the pros and cons of natural medicine is and can be a subject that causes great debates on both sides of the issue. Really the deciding factor for you will be if the therapy you choose to try works. And it really is just as simple as that!

## 4

# PROS AND CONS OF TYPICAL PET PHARMACEUTICAL TREATMENT



6

This is actually going to be a rather short chapter because the pros and cons are really quite well known. Well enough known that you could likely cite them right off the top of your head. Definitely a traditional drug given to your pet is not quite as controversial as natural medicine simply because it IS traditional and therefore should be ok – right?

Well, yes and no. Traditional drugs for dogs are prescribed for any one of hundreds of things that can go wrong with your beloved pet. And in general they will help your dog. Do they have side effects? Yes many of the drugs do have side effects – but then so do herbal and other remedies. Quite the conundrum isn't it?

Perhaps the best place to start is with a few questions.

**If your dog is in pain or needs an antibiotic to deal with a respiratory disease, would you want your Vet to give your dog help right away? Or would you want to try something different that is more natural for your pet?**

Let's pause for a bit and take a look at that situation. Let's say your dog has Kennel Cough. Kennel cough is a dry, hacking cough that shows up about three to seven days after being infected. Signs of the infection last 7 to 21 days. It sounds a bit like your dog needs to clear its throat and any extra activity or pressure on the trachea triggers the cough.

Affected dogs otherwise will appear healthy. Although many dogs that do get Kennel Cough will recover on their own with no medication, many conventional veterinarians treat with antibiotics, steroids, or cough suppressants.

What could be done holistically? The most important focus would be building up the overall health of your dog. Feed the best diet, make sure you have quality time to help your dog feel better, and eliminate any environmental factors that might cause stress. Give immune building supplements.

Decide if your dog does need to be seen by a veterinarian before you try any treatment. If they are eating pretty well, are fairly active and not in extreme pain or irritation from the discharges, try a few home treatments. If you have been treating your dog for a week and there is no response, or your dog seems sick, contact your holistic or conventional veterinarian (or both).

If your animal is already under treatment for another problem, contact your holistic veterinarian before starting any treatment on your own since the sneezing or coughing or runny eyes may be part of the healing crisis.

For all the different conditions, pick one or two treatments to start with – not multiples of treatments all at once. Select by reading about each one then decide which is most needed by your dog. Give one treatment, wait two days and record the changes in your journal, then add in a second treatment. If you are not sure, consult a holistic veterinarian.

Now as you can see from the above example, the onus to go holistic is on you, but since you consider your dog to be a very important member of the family, you would discuss any of the remedies you decide to try with your holistic vet in great detail. They have the skills to determine what natural medicines will work, how quickly and in what doses. You may even find conventional medicines AND natural medicines meet at the halfway point and work together to help your dog.

**Would you want to give your dog a drug that has a proven track record? And there is proof of its performance? Or would you like to try an herbal that has a proven track record.**

What if your dog has Canine influenza? This is a highly contagious respiratory infection of dogs caused by a virus. The two clinical symptoms seen are either the mild or severe form (usually accompanied by pneumonia). The mild form gives dogs a soft, moist persistent cough for 10 to 30 days. The cough may also be dry. Thick nasal discharge may be present, which is usually the result of a secondary bacterial infection.

The severe form gives dogs a high fever of (104°F to 106°F). They also have clinical signs of pneumonia, such as increased respiratory rates and effort. Pneumonia may be due to a secondary bacterial infection. Fortunately most dogs have the mild form.

Because the cause of canine influenza is a virus, treatment is usually supportive in addition to good nutrition to get the immune system to respond effectively. In the milder

form of the disease, a thick green nasal discharge, usually resolves quickly after treatment with a broad-spectrum bactericidal antimicrobial. A broad-spectrum bactericidal antimicrobial is also used for the severe form. The fluoroquinolones are broad-spectrum bacteriocidal drugs that distribute quite well into bone tissue, and are so well absorbed they are usually as effective by the oral route as by intravenous infusion.

Holistically speaking what may happen? Well there is a preparation on the market that contains human grade herbs such as olive leaf, mustard seed, black seed pau d'arco, and a carrier. Most of the information about it indicates it should work for your dog if it has Kennel cough. It does go on to say that the owner should not confuse canine flu with kennel cough because the canine flu can mimic kennel cough. The symptoms are similar except for the discharge from the eyes or nose and the wet congested cough.

It further goes on to point out that if you aren't certain what you are dealing with go ahead and use both of the remedies they recommend. The suggestion is use it for 5 days and if you see no improvement, then add in another remedy. Of course you would be consulting with your holistic vet about this particular product and how it could help you canine. It may well be that the extra support provided to the immune system may be just what the (holistic) doctor ordered.

**Would you want to make sure your dog was under the supervision of a highly trained Vet who has been dealing with drugs for years and knows what will work best for your dog? Or would you also want to try something that has a good reputation for healing?**

Usually if you are going to try natural medicines for your dog, you would want to consult (or should) a licensed, certified herbalist or Vet. Someone who has had years of experience under their belt, and who has a good reputation for helping animals. And that makes sense. How do you know that what you read on various sites on the Net is correct and has been validated? You need to talk to your holistic vet about what your research has discovered.

If you work in partnership trying to figure out what your dog has, you can help promote the healing process with blending herbs and conventional meds.

**Would you want to give your dog drugs that are backed by a pharmaceutical company guarantee of being pure without other additives? Or would you want to try a medicine that has been proven through history to work that has a variety of things in it?**

**Would you want to help your dog as quickly as you could by using drugs that take the shortest path through the bloodstream to the organs etc.? Or would you want to try something that takes longer to work its way to the target but may be more effective?**

**Would you want to give your dog something that over the long term may damage his liver and kidneys despite the fact that it helps him now and in the future? Or would you want to try something holistically that may not damage his kidneys?**

Tough questions right? Making choices like this for the well being of your dog is not for sissies. You have many things to weigh and factor into the equation. Not the least of which is the cost of the drugs as well. Yes those "little" pills may work wonders, but whoa are they ever expensive. Of course you would likely do whatever you need to do for your dog, or you would not be reading this book. Your dog is the best friend you have and deserves the best of care. And the best of care will come from your holistic vet or practitioner who can provide vital care for your friend.

# 5

## HOW TO ASSESS YOUR DOG'S HEALTH



7

### YOUR DOG'S TEMPERATURE

If you want to know what is going on with your dog, you will need to know some basics so you can tell if something has changed from what is the usual or the normal for your dog.

Let's start with what the normal body temperature is for a dog. It usually ranges from 100.5 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit. That would be 38 to 39.2 Celsius. And how do you know what the temperature is? Take it with a rectal or regular thermometer and place the thermometer in the rectum. There is a way to use an ear thermometer on a dog, but you have to be very fast and accurate with where you place the sensor.

If your dog's body temperature is below 100 or above 103 degrees, call your Veterinarian immediately. Trying to tell what your dog's temperature is by feeling the nose or how warm his ears are is an exercise in futility.

Here's how to take your dog's temperature. It's not difficult, but it's best done with two people. Have someone hold the dog still, preferably someone the dog knows and likes. Then apply petroleum jelly to the head or bulb of a rectal thermometer. Slowly slide it into the dog's rectum about an inch deep and NO further. Wait 2 minutes if you are using a mercury thermometer. Slowly remove and read the thermometer, then shake it down and clean it.

## **YOUR DOG'S RESPIRATORY RATE**

The respiratory rate simply means the number of breaths per minute your dog takes and this is checked when your dog is resting. The normal rate is 18-34 breaths a minute. If your dog is in pain, has heart or other breathing problems, has heatstroke or is way too excited to see you, he will have an increased rate of breathing. You must take into consideration the overall condition of your dog and the situation that he is in before you assess the breathing rate.

## **YOUR DOG'S HEART RATE/PULSE**

Larger dogs and those in good physical condition have slower heart rates/pulses than small dogs. Dogs not in good shape will have higher ones. Puppies are the exception to the rule in that they normally have higher heart rates of up to 180 beats a minute until about the age of one year old. That being said, the normal range of heartbeats is 70 to 120 beats per minute.

When you listen for the heartbeat you will hear two sounds – Lub and Dub. One follows the other with no other sounds in-between them. If a heart murmur is present you will hear a swishing or whistling sound in addition to the Lub-Dub.

## **YOUR DOG'S PREGNANCY**

Your female dog will be pregnant for at least 63 days, but this can vary for 58 to 68 days. While she is pregnant you will need to pay attention to her nutritional needs. If you closely monitor her and are keeping a journal of changes in her body, you will know if anything is cause for worry. Basically make sure she is eating a healthy, balanced diet, gets lots of fresh water, lots of exercise as she can tolerate and love, care and attention. Not to mention some extra special treats. Guard against giving her too much food, as you do not want her overweight. Take great care in what you give her in terms of supplements, as some can cause abortion.

Make sure you have not bred your female under the age of two years old. They have not grown enough internally to be able to carry a litter of puppies without being a high-risk pregnancy.

## **YOUR DOG'S TEETH**

Most dogs will have 42 teeth if they are adults, and 28 if they are puppies. Puppies normally lose their baby teeth at about the age of 6 months. In some cases not all the baby teeth have shed when the adult teeth start coming in. This can cause an abscess problem and gum problems with food getting caught in-between the two tightly packed teeth. Consult with your Veterinarian to see if you wish to have this baby tooth removed.

If your dog has chipped or cracked teeth, you will also want to talk to your Vet about what can be done. Unlike humans, dogs can handle having chipped and cracked teeth without the same kind of pain. What they should also have on a regular basis is a teeth

cleaning to keep the gums healthy. So always check your dog's mouth for potential dental problems.

## **YOUR DOG'S WEIGHT RANGE**

For some of the smallest dogs you will find a weight range of between 2 to 3 pounds. For the largest, you can actually go up to 150 pounds. In an ideal world, your dog's weight should be approximately where the last three to five ribs are just barely visible, or you can feel them with a light touch. Frankly, it's better to be a touch too thin than it is to be overweight. The problems that can occur due to being overweight are quite numerous and easily avoided by feeding your dog properly and keeping them trim.

The breed of dog that owns you will determine when the bone growth will stop. Smaller breeds may be fully grown by the age of 6 or 7 months. Large breeds on the other hand may continue to grow anywhere from 18 to 24 months.

## **HEALTHY VS SICK**

Basically it could be said that a healthy dog is happy, energetic, has bright shiny eyes, a never stop wagging tail, a lovely shiny hair coat, a good appetite and isn't overweight. Mind you some of this is just using plain old common sense too. It's not hard to know a healthy dog from one that is sick right?

Well, right and wrong. Dogs that aren't feeling all that good are experts at hiding (like cats are too) their illness. Instinctively they want to seem healthy so they are less vulnerable to predators. So this means you will have to look hard to see initial symptoms. Advanced ones are more obvious. This is where keeping a journal about your dog and how he acts, etc. will come in handy if something happens. It is a great tool for the Vet to help them diagnose as well in addition to your visual observations.

The most common initial sign of possible illness in your dog is lack of appetite. In a multi-dog home where everyone has their own dish and the bowl is always full, it is hard to tell if your dog is getting its daily food rations. Anorexia can creep up so slowly you won't even notice it. This is why it is a good practice to feed at the same time every day so you can readily see precisely what they are eating.

If your dog is less active, and you are thinking it's likely because of getting older, don't take the chance that you are wrong. Have him checked by the Vet. Dogs are considered to be seniors over the age of 6, but many are going gangbusters until later in life. So just because they are "older" does not mean they are on their last legs. Give him the chance to perform into his golden years and have him checked. You may find it is something you can help him with – like a touch of arthritis you could treat with glucosamine.

Weakness in your dog, for instance like falling over when touched lightly, or not sitting down, but falling down and having trouble with balance and coordination are serious signs your dog needs help. You will have seen signs of this impending condition by



noting your dog's appetite, way he moves, way he acts and his lack of interest in really playing or running any longer.

If your dog isn't interested in his environment and he used to go chase everything that moves, this is a symptom of either an early stage in an illness, or a later stage illness. This depends on the severity of what is going on. Again, if you know your dog well, you can assess what changes have happened by noticing his behavior.

If it seems like your dog has lost weight, and he normally is a nice solid canine, this is considered to be a common sign of disease or illness. It's hard to notice weight loss with longhaired dogs or ones you see daily, because weight loss is usually subtle. Basically if you notice your pal feels bonier, or lighter or you can easily feel the ribs, time to head to the Vet's for a checkup.

Does your dog drink a LOT of water? More than you thought usual for him? Does he drink frequently now whereas he did not before? Drinking more is associated with things like kidney disease and diabetes. If you notice this, call your Vet.

Another sign that your dog isn't feeling up to snuff is his lack of grooming. If he stops grooming himself and/or his hair coat changes, he really needs to see a Vet to have his condition assessed.

You're all familiar with the term "doggy breath" also known as halitosis. This is usually the result of dental disease, but could have its origins in another metabolic disorder. Don't wait to find out which it is. Have him checked. And if he is also drooling a LOT, this could mean he has an oral or dental disease. While you are having him checked for doggy breath, have the gums and other possibilities ruled out.

Dogs sleep about 13 to 16 hours a day, but that depends on the age and personality of your dog. If he starts to sleep more than usual, don't assume it is old age. Sleeping more and lethargy can go hand in hand. This is another classic sign of the possibility of an underlying disease or illness. Sleeping more because your dog doesn't feel well can also go hand in hand with him being a lot less involved in being social with you or his other canine companions.

Unless your dog gagged on some grass or a treat went down the wrong way, gagging or vomiting is one of THE most common signs of illness. As you know, some dogs vomit occasionally thanks to their habit of eating things they really shouldn't. If your dog throws up once a week or so, that's usually not a big deal so long as they are still eating properly and having normal bowel movements. But assess this in combination with other behavior. If your dog is full of beans and going like a mad man, and throws up off and on and otherwise looks and acts healthy, just monitor the situation. You will definitely know when you need to take action. Vomiting on a regular basis and a weight loss are not good signs.

If you notice your dog is having trouble breathing, this is a life threatening situation and don't wait. This difficulty breathing is often caused by heart or lung disorders. You can notice it as an increased respiratory rate or effort, open mouth breathing, or a posture in

which the arms are slightly abducted and your dog's neck is extended. **This is classified as an emergency.**

Occasionally your dog may have bouts of diarrhea that come and go, or are related to changes in diet or water, or thanks to something they ate in the garden. It could also be an allergy reaction. If it is not frequent and continuous, and otherwise your dog seems to be in fine spirits, then continue to assess him. If you have concerns, call your Vet.

If your dog is coughing, call the Vet. Coughing is considered to be a serious symptom and can be a warning flag for a number of diseases.

If you notice blood in your dog's urine, you could be dealing with a urinary tract infection or disease, or this may be the result of frequent attempts to urinate. In either case, a trip to the Vet is in order.

That's a lot of information isn't it? Don't worry, although it seems like a lot, it will really be almost second nature to you because you live with your dog and will immediately notice if something is wrong. Or at the very least you will know when things are quite "right".

## **THE MINI MEDICAL**

You're best to leave a full scale all over complete exam to the experts, but it won't hurt for you to be able to perform a mini-medical exam at home. This will allow you to know your dog's body so well you will know when something is different.

The best time to do a mini-medical is usually when you are grooming, or if you have a "naked" dog with hardly any hair and it doesn't need grooming in the usually sense of the word, then do this at cuddle/relax time as part of your bonding routine.

- First start checking for skin condition. Look for dry skin, dandruff and/or fleas and flea dirt. If your dog has a long coat here is how you would do this. Brush his coat out over a piece of white paper or even a paper towel. If you see black specks, wet them with a small drop of water or use a cotton ball to smear them. If it's flea dirt, the specks will go red.
- To get rid of them use a fine-toothed flea comb, and dip it in a bowl of soapy water. The soap holds them down, and the water drowns them. Yes there are other products you can use. Just check with the Vet to find out what. Be aware that some flea preparations can and do cause serious allergic reactions in some dogs that include swelling of the throat, face, tongue and lips, as well as the site the product was administered at. This is a serious complication and if it happens to your dog, call the Vet immediately.
- As you are combing your dog (the one with hair) or gently massaging the dog (the one with hardly any hair), take note of how they react when you are handling them. Does he flinch at a certain spot? Take a close look for lumps, bumps or sores. Is it oozing, rough, mobile, hard or soft? If you find an area that seems to be a problem, make a note of it and bring it up with your Vet.

- Next check the eyes. They should be bright eyed and bushy tailed so to speak, with no redness or runny discharge. Tear stains beneath the eyes could indicate a problem, although some breeds of dog tend to have this problem.
- Check inside the ears. They should be dry and show no discharge. If there is a discharge, you need to speak to your Vet. Also sniff the ears. Yes, SNIFF them. Why? Sniffing will let you know if there is an unpleasant ear odor present. If there is, this is usually a good indication of an infection deep in the ear canal. You may also get something that looks like squashed mud in the ear. Again, this is usually the sign of an infection. You can gently clean the ear with a damp cloth and a combination of 50/50 apple cider vinegar and warm water. This however does not take care of the cause of the infection. And there are numerous types of ear infections, so be sure to have the ears checked, as this can be quite painful for your dog.
- You should check your dog's teeth and gums. They should not be pale or red, but a healthy pink in color. While cleaning your dog's teeth, take a look around her mouth. The gums should be a healthy pink, not pale or red.
- Since your pup has been little if you have handled the paws to teach them to hold still when you clip their nails, you should be able to tell if there are problems. Do the nails need trimming? If they are too long they can be painful to walk on causing lameness and also get caught in things.

That's about it – how to assess your dog's health. When you are done, make sure he gets a special treat for being such a good boy. Do keep a written record of your mini-medicals so you and the Vet know what is normal for him.

## 6

# HOW TO MAKE UP A PET FIRST AID KIT



8

You can either make up your own pet first aid kit, or buy one on the Internet or at a good pet supply store. There really isn't any right or wrong to putting one of these together, but there are some standard items that really need to be in a good kit.

We're going to try and give you a list of contents of the IDEAL pet first aid kit, one that would do you proud in just about any situation. But first a bit on the reasons why you should carry one.

Very simply, you need a good pet first aid kit for emergencies. For that matter, you need human first aid kit as well. And you need them because you just have no idea when something is going to happen and you are not close enough to a Vet to get your dog there.

Make sure you have at least three kits, one in your car, and one at home. If you happen to have a working dog, and that dog goes to work with you, then make sure you also have a first aid kit and your work location. The more complete your kits are, the better equipped you are to take care of emergencies as they happen. Don't wait until you need the kit or it will be too late. Put it together now as you are reading this chapter. You will thank yourself for your foresight.

First thing to think about is the purpose of a first aid kit. It's to relieve suffering, save a life, and to prevent further physical suffering until you can reach a qualified Vet. Take some time to think about the kinds of emergencies you could run into with your dog.

Insect bite, snake bite, broken ankle or leg, puncture wound, dog fight injuries like a torn ear or bite wound, choking etc. You get the idea. Then start collecting the items you need for your kit.

Once again you can order kits if you don't want to make one up, but make sure you read the contents carefully, because some of the "kits" are really just band aids and won't be of any use to you or your dog. You also need to find out if the kit you are considering buying has perishable items in it – like aspirin or epi-pens so you can replace them when they expire.

Many of the kits do have some form of medication in them, and the one we are putting together for you has many drugs in it. **ALWAYS CONSULT WITH A VET ABOUT THE RIGHT DOSE FOR YOUR DOG**, and how often to give a certain drug. And always ask about possible allergy reactions.

Don't want to do your own kits because the supplies for it come in larger packages than you want for just one kit? Well, actually make up at least two to three kits as we mentioned before (car, home, working dog environment) so you are prepared no matter where you are. That brings down the cost of the items per each kit.

Buy your kit supplies first before you buy a first aid box to put them in. This will give you a better idea of what size of a kit box you will need. And make sure you put your supplies in a box that is clearly labeled FIRST AID KIT, not a box that once held frozen shrimp or pizza. You want to be able to find this kit in a hurry not search for it in a panic, and not recall what box you put things in. Make sure everyone in your family knows where this emergency first aid pet kit is located but that it's out of reach of young children and young animals.

And now – what the IDEAL pet first aid kit should have in it. Actually when it gets right down to brass tacks, ALL pet first aid kits should have ALL the items in it that we are going to tell you about. Why? You can never be too safe or too prepared when it comes to handling a pet (or human) emergency.

## **PET FIRST AID KIT ITEMS**

- **Rectal Thermometer** – the glass or newer electronic kind that beeps when it is finished registering a temperature. They are slightly smaller than the glass kind and don't break as easily either. Bonus is they can also be covered with thin sleeves to stop the spread of germs and be used as oral thermometers.

Yes, they do have a battery that you'll have to replace, and it is more expensive than a glass thermometer – but definitely well worth it. So remember to include extra batteries in your kit and rotate them out on expiry date. Remember normal canine body temperature is 100.5 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

- **Lubricating jelly** – you will need this to lubricate the thermometer. Something like white petroleum jelly
- **Instant hot and cold compresses** – for injuries like sprains, bites, swelling etc.

- **Adhesive tape** - you will use this to secure bandages - both non-stick paper tape like Dermicel hypoallergenic cloth tape and water-proof tape – one inch by ten yards
- **Blunt tipped scissors** – these are ESSENTIAL as you will need these to cut hair away from wounds
- **Bandage scissors**
- **Splints** - try to include various sizes for any contingency, and if your dog is small, then include something size appropriate to use as a splint on them
- **Alcohol swabs** – for sterilizing instruments or small areas of skin
- **Triple Antibiotic ointment** - this would be for NON PUNCTURE wounds and would be something like Betadine ointment, Bacitracin, Neosporin
- **Iodine Prep Solution** – antiseptic for cleaning wounds or burns
- **Hydrocortisone acetate** – one percent cream. Used for reducing inflammation.
- **Providone-iodine ointment** – antiseptic to prevent infection in burns, lacerations, abrasions
- **Biocaine lotion** – to treat wounds, abrasions, minor burns and hot spots
- **Contact lens solution or eye wash** - for rinsing eyes, or to clean wounds. You can use water if you have it available.
- **Cotton swabs** – like the kind they use on babies and that you use to gently clean dogs ears
- **Green soap** - a mild antibacterial soap for cleaning skin, wounds
- **Sterile cotton** - or you can use cotton balls to staunch wounds, apply creams or other topical lotions etc.
- **Sterile Non Adherent Gauze Pads** - the best size is the larger 4" since it can easily be cut into smaller sizes if necessary
- **Rolls of gauze/sterile stretch gauze bandage** - or cling gauze bandage (1-2"). This would be used to dress wounds etc.
- **Gauze sponges** – 50 4 x 4 inch sponges, two per envelope
- **Hydrogen Peroxide** - 10 ml every 15 minutes to induce vomiting in animals that have ingested a non-caustic poison or for cleaning up wounds

- **Rubbing Alcohol** - widely used for cleansing hands and instruments and for the disinfection of skin before giving a needle.
- **Razor blade** – numerous uses from cutting bandage to snake bites
- **Stockingette** – this you would use to protect a bandage on a leg or foot
- **Rubber bulb ear syringe** - used for flushing eyes, ears, wounds – the two ounce capacity
- **Forceps and/or tweezers** – for removing embedded objects or to place a gauze pad in a difficult area
- **Self-adhesive bandage** - such as Vet Wrap or Ace self-adhering athletic bandage, the 3 inch width
- **Pepto Bismol tablets** – for gastrointestinal problems
- **Kaopectate tablets** – maximum strength for diarrhea
- **Di-Gel Liquid** – for antacid and anti-gas
- **Mineral Oil** – to eliminate constipation
- **Generic Benadryl capsules** – 25 mg for allergies
- **Buffered aspirin** – ASK YOUR VET about dose and whether or not to administer this to your dog or not, and under what circumstances, as aspirin and Tylenol can be toxic to dogs
- **Dramamine** – for motion sickness
- **Blanket**
- **Muzzle**
- **Ziplock bags**
- **Gloves**
- **Oral syringe**
- **Blood stopper**
- **Emergency ice pack**
- **Eye droppers**

Okay, that is one of THE most complete first aids kits you will ever find. And there are still other things you should consider adding to it. For instance you will want to have numbers for the Animal Poison Hotline & Poison Control for Pets in your area. Be aware that many of them do charge a fee.

You should also have all the phone numbers for your Vet included in your kit too, and keep the kit in an area where all family members can find it easily. It likely goes without saying, but all the components of the kit should be clear to everyone in your family. In other words, KNOW HOW TO USE THEM, don't just pack the kit and not understand how to use what is in it. Your pharmacy and veterinarian have all of the supplies you will need

Do NOT use your first aid kit as a substitute for your Vet.

There are other emergency components we strongly recommend you add to your first aid kits. These are items that would be more applicable in a disaster situation, but if the whole kit is complete, all you need to do is grab the one kit and you're good to go.

#### **THE EXTRA ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT**

- **Dog food and treats**
- **Blankets**
- **12-hour light sticks**
- **Bowls**
- **Water**
- **Chew Sticks**
- **Tennis Ball(s)**
- **Tug Toys**
- **Leash**
- **Collar**
- **50 foot rope**
- **Bags to do poop patrol**
- **Can Opener**
- **Waterproof container**
- **Small portable shovel**



# 7

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY

### A – B

**Disclaimer:** We are not Veterinarians and therefore strongly recommend if you do try these natural remedies, you consult with either a holistic veterinarian or a conventional veterinarian about the type of natural remedy you are considering and the dose and frequency of dose.

Also understand that each dog and each Vet will recommend something different for your dog. That is the whole foundation of natural medicine - that each dog (each person) is a life force unto themselves, and what will work with one person (or dog) may not work with another. So in general what you will read here are suggestions of what may work for your dog. If you have difficulties or the remedy does not seem to be doing what it should, the call the Vet and discuss your options.

Note: You may get these remedies from a health food store, your Holistic Veterinarian or a certified, licensed Herbalist. Always make sure you are totally informed about how these medicines work, how often to give them, how to administer them and in what dose. Dose issues are very much in the realm of your Vet based on YOUR dog. Try not to administer drugs, herbals, homeopathic or otherwise without being properly informed about what is the correct dose for YOUR dog.

#### **ABSCESSSES**

##### **Signs**

An abscess is a localized collection of pus in any part of the body, caused by an infection. It is a tender mass, warm and painful to the touch, usually surrounded by a colored border ranging from pink to an angry red. Once the pus has disappeared, so does the pain, and the tissues recuperate their elasticity.

##### **Causes**

An abscess is due to a bacterial infection, parasites or presence of an irritating agent in the tissues, chemical or mechanic. An acute abscess can present very rapidly with the formation of a little head that pops quickly, or re-absorbs and disappears.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Treatment for an abscess depends on whether or not the abscess has ruptured. For those that have not ruptured, an area of the skin over the lump is cleaned and the abscess is lanced to drain pus from the lump. This procedure may mean sedation or general anesthesia for your dog.

After a majority of the pus has been removed, a disinfectant solution such as povidone iodine or chlorhexidine is used to flush the abscess and remove additional pus. After a thorough cleaning, antibiotics are generally prescribed.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's abscess problems**

- Belladonna is usually indicated for the initial symptoms of abscess. E.g. rapid swelling that becomes bright red with intense painful throbbing. Pus develops quickly, the swelling increases and the redness begins to radiate.
- Hepar sulphur can be used where the pus is not decomposed. If a certain area of your dog is very sensitive, this is a good indication of the need for Hepar sulphur. If Hepar is given in higher doses the abscess may not suppurate. There is also Calcarea sulphurica, found useful when the suppuration seems to continue indefinitely.
- Silicea would be used when the suppuration continues and the wound won't heal. Using silicea will turn the pus benign and granulation will appear. Stop the remedy at this point.
- Silicea is usually prescribed after an abscess has been lanced or opened by means of poultice.
- Mercurius is to be used once the pus has formed and is very effective for glandular abscesses. For tooth abscesses at the roots it is very effective.
- Sulphur is very useful in chronic cases where the discharge is profuse and there is a fever.
- Arnica may be used where the abscesses do not mature, instead they shrivel up and another abscess appears.
- Rhus toxicodendron is considered for use in cases of acute suppuration.
- Echinacea is well tolerated and effective in suppurative conditions.
- Ginseng is considered to be an immune system stimulant, and this speeds up healing of the wound, as does Astragalus, a traditional Chinese herb.
- Goldenseal and Barberry Root can both be used as well. Goldenseal is used topically by applying drops to the wound. This is an antimicrobial herb. Barberry Root is from the same family as Goldenseal, but is used orally.

- Oil of Oregano has antibacterial properties and can be used effectively as well.

As you can see, there are many options open to you and your dog to heal abscesses. We have not given doses and amounts because, once again, each dog is different (their own whole system) and each will respond differently to natural medicine. Always ask your Vet or Herbalist about doses etc.

### **What you can do at home**

What you want to do is help your dog's body fight off infection. You can warm compresses for about 5-10 minutes 3- 4 times per day to help increase the flow of blood to the area. This increases the white blood cell population within the abscess, to better fight the infection.

If you're dealing with a ruptured abscess, make sure you clean it thoroughly. Often the wound is left open to drain during the healing process. It is crucial your dog does not lick or chew at the abscess. Saliva is contaminated with bacteria and will only prolong and prevent healing. If you don't have any luck keeping your dog from licking at the area, an Elizabethan collar may be needed.

Keep your dog as dry as you can and keep the abscess from getting wet. If it does and then gets mud or dirt in the wound, clean it once again. It is essential you keep the wound clean.

If you are given antibiotics or other remedies for your dog's abscess, finish everything you are given.

Try to prevent injuries that could result in abscesses. E.g. keep your dog away from other aggressive animals to reduce the chances of fights.

Try not to run your dog or let your dog run in areas where there are lots of objects that he could cut or puncture himself on.

Keep your yard free of sharp objects etc.

Prompt veterinary care after a fight, trauma or penetrating wound can prevent the formation of an abscess.

## **ALLERGIES**

### **Signs**

Allergies can mean just about anything for your dog, from itching skin, to rashes to food and drug allergies. Let's say your dog is itching and scratching and in general driving himself mad. First get him to a dermatologist to have him skin tested for allergies common to dogs – such as molds, smoke, soy, corn, grains, etc.

## **Causes**

Grains first appeared in pet foods about 70 years ago when consumers wanted pet food in a bag and manufacturers wanted lower costs with inexpensive calories from grains. Grains like rice or wheat provide low-cost calories, but their high carbohydrate content contributes to obesity, diabetes, kidney stones/struvite crystals, behavior problems, allergies, skin/coat problems and a host of other health problems.

Airborne inhalants are also a major cause of dog allergies. E.g. smoke, second hand smoke, molds, dust, pollens, chemicals, perfumes, other household things like room freshener etc.

Your dog also may have allergies to drugs, herbals or homeopathic remedies as well.

## **Conventional treatment**

Treatment for allergies in dogs usually consists of steroid drugs to reduce the inflammation, antihistamines to control the allergic part of the allergy/asthma and then bronchodilators to open the airways during an attack.

## **Herbal remedies that may assist with your dog's allergy problems**

Eyebright and barberry bark are used as astringents for nasal and sinus catarrh and mucus and reduce swelling around the eyes. Poria absorbs dampness that creates a lot of mucus or phlegm. The base of this particular formula, Er Chen Tang, which has not been refined since the 10th century, has been found to dry the dampness and resolve phlegm. It is very useful in the treatment of upper respiratory infections and bronchitis.

Butterbur is another natural remedy for seasonal allergies. This herb is a shrub like plant that grows in northern Asian, Europe and parts of North America. Butterbur has actually been used in natural medicine for many things from migraines to coughs and from allergies to asthma. While still being investigated, this herb is thought to work in a similar way to allergy medications that block the action of histamines and leukotrienes – two of the chemicals involved in allergy reactions.

Belonging to the ragweed family, butterbur would not be a good choice for your dog (or you) if he has allergies to ragweed, marigold, daisy, or chrysanthemum. It is advisable to not use the raw herb or teas, extracts or capsules made from the raw herb as they contain pyrrolizidine (alkaloids) that can be toxic to the liver and kidneys.

Other natural allergy remedies contain the following ingredients – angelica root, and herb in the parsley family that is normally used for flavoring. Also you can use arctium, which is the fruit of the Great Burdock. Then there's calamus gum, derived from the dragon's blood plant. Other ingredients that will also work are salvia, which is a scarlet-rooted plant, foxglove root, sophora root (bitter root), and extracts from forsythia. Look also to licorice root, kochia seeds, stem of *Schizonepeta tenuifolia*, and siler, which is *Ledebouirella seseloides*. Many of these ingredients will work better when blended together. You will need to speak to a Holistic Vet or Herbalist to know what to use and how much. You could also ask about a mixture that contains these herbs as well,

adrenalinum, allium cepa, euphrasia, histaminum, hydrastis, kali bich, merc. iodatum, sabadilla, and thuja.

You can pamper your dog with an oatmeal shampoo as well to help reduce the insane itching. Use cool water and let the shampoo sit on his coat for at least 10 minutes, then rinse and dry. Once dry try using calendula ointment, and herbal that will help ease the itch by applying it topically. By the way, don't over look acupuncture as an aid for allergies. It appears to be quite effective.

For anti-inflammatory help you can consider several things. The first would be burdock root or you could try licorice root (but not long-term and not if your dog has kidney, liver or heart problems). Another anti-inflammatory and antibacterial is Oregon grape root. And also consider flower essences, because even your dog appreciates things that smell good.

- Inula helenium (Elecampane) treats coughs, bronchitis, asthma etc.
- Althea officinalis (Marshmallow) known to help bronchitis, irritating coughs and infections. Reduces inflammation, relieves dry coughs, bronchial asthma etc.
- Mag. phos. (D6) eases a tight chest and is a known antispasmodic for constricted airways. Is also considered to be a natural painkiller.
- Kali. mur. (D6) excellent for its mucus decongesting properties. Anti-inflammatory remedy that prevents infections of the respiratory tract.
- Arsen. alb. (30C) treats acute bronchospasm and dry throat. Useful for treating inflammation of the eyes, sneezing, allergies, skin conditions etc.
- Phosphorus (30C) excellent for respiratory conditions – asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, tight chest.

### **What you can do at home**

For seasonal allergies otherwise known as allergic rhinitis – yes, like the kind we humans get – you could try this combination (there are a wide variety of remedies you can use, you need to consult with your Holistic Vet to know which one would suit YOUR dog). But this is a commonly sold one on the Internet whose name will not be mentioned. This is merely an example of a remedy that is effective for seasonal allergies.

Next try an allergy food elimination diet. Start from the premise that one of the most common food allergies for dogs is soy. Read your dog food labels and start eliminating any foods containing soy or TVP. Then start slowly introducing the food. Make a journal of what happens.

Try to keep your dog away from airborne inhalants that you know cause him problems. Don't smoke around your dog.

Try not to use air freshener if you know it causes your dog problems.

Also aim to keep the air in your home humidified and purified – both should help with any breathing difficulties your dog has.

Find a shampoo that works for your dog that will not cause him problems. There are many hypoallergenic products on the market.

Make sure you have allergy relief meds in your first aid kit.

## **ANEMIA**

### **Signs**

The most easily recognized sign of anemia is the loss of normal pink color of the gums. Anemic dogs also don't have much in the way of stamina, so they seem very listless or tired. Pale gums and lethargy symptoms will prompt your vet to perform blood tests to check for anemia.

Other signs may include increased respiratory rate, episodes of collapse, evidence of blood loss, blood in urine or feces, external blood loss, decreased appetite, yellow discoloration of the skin, abdominal distension. Vomiting and weight loss.

### **Causes**

There are many diseases that cause anemia and these are grouped into diseases that cause blood loss, diseases that cause red blood cell breakdown and diseases that decrease the production of red blood cells.

- Blood loss categories include: Trauma or injury that severs blood vessels or internal organs, parasites such as fleas, ticks, and hookworms, tumors of the intestinal tract, kidneys, and urinary bladder and diseases that prevent proper clotting of blood
- Red blood cell breakdown categories include: Autoimmune diseases, blood parasites, chemicals or toxins, cancer
- Diseases that decrease the production of red blood cells include: Any severe, chronic disease, really poor nutrition or nutritional imbalances, autoimmune diseases, hypothyroidism, chemicals or toxins, cancer.

Anemia is usually taken to mean a lack of iron in the diet. Not so, what it really means is a lack of oxygen in the blood and this can be the result of several things. It could result from lack of iron in your dog's diet, poor absorption of the iron in their food, inefficient bone marrow production of red blood cells or even inefficiencies in the spleen.

Conventional treatment

If your dog's anemia is life-threatening, a blood transfusion is needed. This may be performed immediately after a blood sample is taken for testing. The main purpose of a blood transfusion is to stabilize the dog long enough that a determination of the cause of the anemia can be made.

Depending on the cause and extent of the anemia, it may take three to four weeks for your pet's body to restore its red blood cell count to a normal level. Your veterinarian may recommend a blood transfusion or administration of a drug called Oxyglobin. Other than a blood transfusion, Oxyglobin is the only treatment that provides immediate relief.

Oxyglobin consists of chemically stabilized hemoglobin (the protein that carries oxygen) formulated in a balanced salt solution. Administered intravenously, this stabilized hemoglobin immediately circulates in the fluid part of blood and delivers oxygen to the body's tissues and organs. This helps stabilize an anemic dog until your veterinarian can treat the underlying cause of the anemia and the dog can restore its own red blood cells.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's anemia problems**

What you could try is a blend of herbs including comfrey, nettle, red clover, Echinacea, sage, rue, elecampane, burdock root and yarrow plus Bach flower remedies including wild rose, pine and olive. Anemia take at least 3 to 6 months to resolve itself so dig in your heels for the ride and keep close tabs on how your dog is doing. If the mixture blended for your dog doesn't seem to be working too well, then there may be other issues at play. You could also try phosphorus.

Understand that each Vet you consult may have a different approach and take on what and how to give the various herbs and treatments that are available for your dog. It's up to you to get as much information as you can, and then make an informed decision about what is best in your circumstances.

- Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian Ginseng) used for thousands of years to enhance the body's vital energy. Boosts immune system.
- Rosmarinus officinalis (Rosemary) known as an energizer and helps to promote the circulation.
- Arthrospira platenis(Spirulina) contains high concentrations of protein, B12 and folic acid and carotenoids. Boosts energy, enhance liver function etc.
- Emblica officinalis(Amalaki) helps rejuvenate energy, enhance well-being and noted for combating aging and decay. Rich in Vitamin C.

### **What you can do at home**

Help your dog do the daily things he needs to do with love and tender care. For the first little while until he regains his strength he will need your help to get up, eliminate, walk and even lay down.

Make sure his diet is TOP quality and very high in nutritional goodies that he very desperately needs at this time.

Make sure he is drinking lots of fresh water.

Take him outside more often to help him eliminate.

Short walks are good to just get him into the routine of getting mobile.

Don't over tire him

Reduce the stress in his life if you are able to.

Pamper him with a special treat now and then. Being ill isn't any fun for your dog either.

Monitor your dog's progress by keeping in touch with the Vet on a regular basis until your dog is out of the woods.

## **ARTHRITIS**

### **Signs**

You may see a gradual onset of lameness in one or more legs, and your dog may not be as happy about going for walks nor wanting to climb stairs. The stiffness is usually worse in the mornings and gets better as the day goes on. There will likely be pain on palpitation of the joints and they may also be swollen.

### **Causes**

There are many forms of arthritis that can occur in your dog. The most common one is osteoarthritis. He may have immune mediated arthritis, infective arthritis or arthritis whose cause is unknown (aka idiopathic).

Most common causes are traumatic injury resulting in joint instability, obesity, genetically weakened or unstable joints, and in young dogs, it may be due to failure of proper bone development.

### **Conventional treatment**

Conventional therapies include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and corticosteroids which are quite effective but also associated with a high rate of side effects including gastrointestinal ulceration and kidney problems.

Lifestyle changes would be recommended such as weight loss if your dog is obese, dietary changes, and carefully managed exercise.

Surgery.



### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's arthritis problems**

You can help him with some of the following herbs, usually blended to suit your particular dog's situation and type of arthritis. Devil's Claw root for the maintenance of the muscular-skeletal system (not for pregnant females); White Willow Bark, good for the digestive system; the herb Meadow Sweet, which neutralizes the acid in the system; and nettles, which are cleansing, rich in iron and Vitamin C and increase circulation. You can also use rosehips, hawthorn, kelp, boswellia, and yucca.

You can also add the supplement glucosamine hydrochloride to your dog's diet. It helps build cartilage and delays further breakdown. Along with this some Vets also recommend MSM – the abbreviation for Methylsulfonylmethane.

MSM is generally thought of as a product additive for arthritis related joint discomfort due to joint pain, but it historically has had many other uses.

The thing with MSM is effect it has on the body and why your dog would take it. Strictly speaking, MSM is the biologically available (organic) form of sulfur. Sulfur is one of the major components of food and one of the most prevalent materials in the body. Most likely due to its chemical similarity to sulfur, MSM has shown to be effective at relieving inflammation and some would argue that MSM is far better than some of the other COX2 drugs or NSAIDS out there.

Compared to glucosamine, there have been fewer MSM studies done. When you look at substances to rebuild and reconstitute cartilage, MSM shows little clinical evidence that says it can do that, where as glucosamine has a longer track record. MSM might dull some of the pain in the muscles. So used in combination with glucosamine and chondroitin, it should help the glucosamine work better and promote faster relief.

SAME, or s-adenosyl-methionine is a naturally occurring substance in the body, and is believed to help protect the joints. It's used in the production of the feel-good chemical messengers in the brain. These regulate mood. It also helps the liver break down toxins and reduces the pain, stiffness and inflammation of things like arthritis.

Acupressure is wonderful for arthritis and a good pain reliever for your dog.

Aspirin does have its uses for treatment of pain and inflammation, but it **MUST BE USED WITH EXTREME CAUTION**. Aspirin can be toxic if given in high doses of about 30 mg per pound of the dog. Even baby aspirin could be poisonous for dogs weighing two pounds or less. An adult aspirin (320 mg.) would be toxic for a 10-pound dog. Make sure you are using the aspirin for the right reason and at the right dose. **CONSULT YOUR VET!** Aspirin is poorly tolerated by young dogs, as they lack the enzymes necessary to process the aspirin. It can also cause upset stomachs and ulcers.

### **What you can do at home**

First work on your dog's weight and provide him with a good healthy diet and careful exercise. Your dog's diet needs to contain adequate protein for building muscles and adequate calcium for strong bones.

You might want to try acupuncture for pain management and that may eliminate the need for medications.

Even though your dog has arthritis, regular exercise is still needed to keep joints flexible and ligaments strong. Not to mention the fact that it will help keep your dog's weight down.

Do not over feed your dog. If he has not finished his meal within 20 minutes, pick it up and offer it again later. Don't add extra food to it if he DOES eat it all right away.

## **BLADDER PROBLEMS**

### **Signs**

This could come in many forms from the submissive peeing to a dribble on the floor while they sleep.

Urinary incontinence is when urine involuntarily leaks from the bladder. This is more commonly seen in adult and older dogs. One of the most common signs is the leakage of a small amount of urine while the dog is sleeping or resting (dogs will often "lick themselves" in these situations).

### **Causes**

Bladder problems seem to be more common in older dogs and middle-aged female dogs that have lost their source of estrogen due to spaying. However you must be open to the other cause of bladder control problems, which is liver or kidney failure.

Most cases of incontinence are due to a bladder infection, drinking too much water, a weak bladder sphincter (common in females) or spinal cord disease.

It is important to differentiate between involuntary urine leakage and behavioral urinary issues like submissive urination, lack of house training, territorial marking or senility. Animals may urinate in the house voluntarily and this is different from incontinence. Watch your pet closely to be sure what you are seeing is really incontinence.

### **Conventional treatment**

This largely depends on what the underlying cause of the bladder problem happens to be. It could be any thing from antibiotics to hormones. In dogs, diethylstilbestrol is the most common estrogen used in the case of females. In male dogs, testosterone seem to be more effective than estrogens, possibly through action on the prostate.

Your vet may also use phenylpropanolamine (currently available in liquid and chewable tablets and is typically given two or three times daily) a medication that acts by enhancing release of the neurotransmitter chemicals that act on the receptors of bladder sphincter. Basically it sends a message to the bladder sphincter to hold it.

Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, common decongestants, may also be used. Side effects can include irritability, appetite suppression and blood pressure changes.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's bladder problems**

For dribbling and incontinence you can try a blend of alumina, belladonna, cantharis, equisitum hiemale, physalis alkegengi, plantago major, and rhus aromatica. And you can do other things to help your pet handle the "dribbles" like put down less water at night. Also talk to your Vet about the possibility of using a glandular supplement – called raw gland supplement – that can help your dog produce more natural estrogen.

Again, the other natural/holistic help for your dog for this condition is acupuncture.

### **What you can do at home**

There are a variety of things you can do at home including finding a special bed for the dog who has urinary incontinence. But the first thing to do is rule out the difference between involuntary leakage and house training or other problems.

If you have not had good success house training your dog, it is best you contact a professional trainer to learn the other methods of potty training. Some of them include using puppy pee pads, crate training (and excellent way to go and very effective), the newspaper route (on the floor, not rolled up to swat noses) and just in general, basic obedience and manners.

If your dog is doing this involuntarily, then you can make some lifestyle changes for them and make sure they go outside more often or that you take them outside more often to help them. For instance, if your dog wakes up from a snooze, take them right outside.

If you have submissive peeing, most often your dog will grow out of this habit, but if they don't you may have to resort to a rubber mat or plastic runner (as this tends to happen in a predictable place etc.) What is extremely important is you do NOT punish for submissive peeing.

Even if they are dribbling, make sure they have fresh water and don't restrict the water intake. Definitely talk to your Vet about this.

Take a good look at their diet. Is it high quality and balanced? That is what your dog will need.

And always, keep them well exercised and fit.

## **BOOSTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM**

### **Signs**

Your dog seems to get recurring infections, is listless, not overly enthusiastic about going for a walk, has allergies, is a picky eater etc. You can tell your dog's immune system needs boosting if he gets ill a lot. But having said that, being proactive and keeping his immune system in top shape is a good idea.

### **Causes**

Causes of a weakened immune system can range from trauma to illness and from injury to blood loss.

### **Conventional treatment**

Depending on what the presenting symptoms are your Vet will run blood tests and other tests to determine if there is an underlying cause for recurring infections etc.

Treatment would follow the course of medications needed for the condition identified, which would not always boost the immune system.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's immune system**

Boosting your dog's immune system is the best preventative thing you can do for your dog hands down. It will help him ward off all kinds of illnesses and give him a longer, healthier life. While you might not see it, your dog's immune system does behind the scenes work to combat viruses, bacteria and other stressful factors. But, like humans, your dog's immune system can get run down.

Boosting the immune system can make such an enormous difference for your dog it's well worth checking out. Herbally speaking we find that research indicates baical skullcap (scute) provides an antibiotic effect against six types of bacteria and also shows well against retro-viruses.

- Ginseng of course is well known as an immuno-stimulating herbal and it enhances antibody responses, cell-mediated immunity, and production of interferon. Ginseng also increases natural killer cells.
- Astragalus strengthens the Qi (or life force energy) and helps to prevent and fight colds and bacteria.
- Atractylodes is quite often used with ginseng in immune system booster formulas. It helps tone up the digestion and boost energy plus increases white blood cell count.
- Kelp is used as the source for organically bound iodine to maintain a healthy thyroid.
- Garlic will reduce the risk of cancer and infections and is extremely protective of the cardiovascular system.
- Other herbs blended in with the above to boost the immune system may include licorice root, ginger root, jujube fruit, stevia leaf, schisandra fruit and poria

sclerotium.

**What you can do at home**

Feed a quality well balanced diet.

Offers fresh clean water.

Keep your dog fit and exercised.

If you have herbal supplements, give them only as directed.

Keep your dog away from ill animals.

Keep your dog's required vaccinations up to date.

If your dog is exposed to another sick animal, speak to your vet.

Make sure your dog gets enough sleep and play time.

Keep stress to a minimum for your companion.

Groom him on a regular basis. Nothing says loving like a good cuddle and groom.

# 8

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY

### C – D

#### **CANCER**

##### **Signs**

If your dog shows any of these signs, call your Vet for a diagnosis. If your dog has a lump or sore (that doesn't heal) that won't go away or abnormal swellings that continue to grow, he is eating but losing weight, and is finding it hard to chew or swallow. If you observe bleeding or discharge from any body opening or your dog has a bad smell. If your dog tires easily and doesn't want to exercise and has persistent lameness of stiffness or has quite eating for more than a day or two. Also, if he has trouble breathing, urinating or making stool it is time to call the Vet.

Cancer in your dog can be treated a variety of ways holistically. There are two schools of thought on treating this disease, one the conventional method with chemo etc. and the second is holistically with herbs and a proper diet. The third line of reasoning goes try combining both schools conventional and holistic to give your beloved dog a fighting chance.

Research on the Internet will show you many success stories revolving around using holistic remedies. They also don't just focus on herbals, there are many other things you can do to help your dog. We'll give you an idea of the kinds of herbs used in a cancer remedy for dogs. Always, always, double check with your Vet when considering any of these alternative remedies.

- Skin - Skin tumors are common in older dogs and they are often benign. Your veterinarian should examine check all skin tumors in your dog to determine if any are malignant.
- Breast - 50% of all breast tumors in dogs are malignant. Spaying your female pet between 6 and 12 months of age greatly reduces the risk of breast cancer. Surgery is the treatment of choice for this type of cancer. Follow up treatment may be recommended.

- Head & Neck - Cancer of the mouth is common in dogs. Signs to watch for in this type of cancer are a mass on the gums, bleeding, odor, or difficulty eating. Since many swellings are malignant, early, aggressive treatment is essential.
- Cancer may also develop inside your dog's nose. Bleeding from the nose, breathing difficulty, or facial swelling are symptoms that may indicate cancer and should be checked by your veterinarian.
- Lymphoma - a common form of cancer in dogs, characterized by enlargement of one or many lymph nodes. Chemotherapy is frequently effective in controlling this type of cancer.
- Testicles - Testicular tumors are common in dogs, especially those with retained testes. Most of these cancers are preventable with neutering and curable with surgery if done early in the disease process.
- Abdominal Tumors - Tumors inside the abdomen are common but it is difficult to make an early diagnosis. Weight loss or abdominal enlargement are signs of these tumors.
- Bone - Bone tumors are most often seen in large breed dogs. The leg bones, near joints, are the most common sites. Persistent pain, lameness, and swelling in the affected area are common symptoms.

Note: Many of the above signs are also seen with non-cancerous conditions **but they still call for prompt attention by a veterinarian** to figure out the cause. Cancer is frequently treatable and early diagnosis helps your veterinarian give you treatment options and your dog.

### **Causes**

Cancer has many causes or risk factors.

Some of the risk factors are the genetics of the breed. For instance boxers and giant breed dogs are highly susceptible to tumors. Other factors such as carcinogenic chemicals could be in your dog's environment or diet e.g. formaldehyde, chlorine-containing compounds, nitrates, etc. Some of these chemicals cause the genetic code of your dog's DNA to mutate into cancerous cells.

There are also certain physical causes or agents of cancer e.g. radiation, asbestos etc. that cause cancer through chronic irritation and inflammation.

Some viruses have also been found to cause cancer in animals. So basically, cancer doesn't always have just the one cause, it may be a combination of genetics, physical and chemical carcinogens.

You will likely appreciate that with the above factors that cause cancer that the immune system plays a crucial role in detecting and eliminating new cancers. Anyone of the above factors that cause the immune system to be suppressed raises the chance of tumors. Hormones can also be a cancer causing factor.

Breast or mammary tumors in dogs are quite common and occur only in older unsprayed females. This due to the hormone rises in unsprayed females associated with their heat cycles.

### **Conventional treatment**

Three basic methods of treatment exist for dealing with cancer in dogs.

The first is medical management and the use of targeted drugs that inhibit the tumor growth or kill cancer cells.

The second choice/option is surgery to remove all or most of the tumor. Some surgeries are 100 percent effective if all the cancer cells are removed. In other surgeries, where total removal isn't possible, it does reduce the tumor load for your dog. There may also be a further follow-up surgery to control the growth of the cancer.

The third option is radiation therapy done by specialists in veterinary radiology. There may be up to three approaches to therapy for your dog. Sadly, some patients will not survive long term if the cancer has metastasized or is of a type that does not respond to targeted therapy. Each case is evaluated on its own because no two cancer patients are exactly alike.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's cancer problems**

- Astragalus membranaceus is one herbal used in traditional Chinese Medicine, and is also known by the name Huang Qi. It's claim to fame is that it has the ability to improve the functioning of the immune system and protect against disease. Recent research shows this herb also helps to stimulate the immune system and may also prevent the spread of malignant cancer cells. This finding is very important for dogs who have had chemotherapy and/or radiation. Astragalus membranaceus helps lower blood sugar levels, speeds up healing time for wounds, helps alleviate fatigue, lowers blood pressure and regulates water metabolism.
- Another anti-tumor herbal is Viscum album, which you would recognize as mistletoe. It also helps lower blood pressure and kicks up the immune system.
- Echinacea purpurea is without a doubt one of the most well known herbs touted for its beneficial effects on the immune system. It is also noted for its antifungal, antiviral and antibacterial properties. But this isn't all echinacea is noted for. It's used as a natural antibiotic, an immune stimulant and anti-allergy agent, as well as being good for the lymphatic system. There is a great deal of research that suggests that regular use on your dog will keep him healthy.



- Indian ginseng or withania somnifera which you may know as yarrow assists with growth, health and energy. It is said regular use helps nourish the blood and increase hemoglobin levels. This important Ayurvedic tonic herb also has anti-tumor properties and can help to prevent or slow development of cancers. That aside it is highly regarded as an anti-inflammatory with the added benefit of having calming properties.
- Sylibum marianus or milk thistle is a highly touted liver tonic and restorative. Interestingly enough this has been used medicinally as far back as 2,000 years. One of the few herbals that have undergone intensive clinical trials, it is known to counteract the harmful effects of prescription drugs and vaccinations on the liver, helping it return to normal.
- Milk thistle actually contains a flavonoid complex called silymarin, a powerful antioxidant. It blocks the entrance of toxins into the liver and removes toxins at a cellular level. What this means is it results in regeneration of liver cells and improved liver functioning. This has a direct impact on the overall systemic health of your dog as the liver is one of the most important organs in the body.
- Cat's Claw, a South American plant also called Uncaria tormentosa, has been used for hundreds of years in Peru and has anti-tumor properties.
- We've already mentioned the importance of antioxidants, but it is a good idea to also add these to the list of herbs we have already spoken of. Vitamin A, C, E and Selenium. Don't forget the extra flavonoids either such as flavones, isoflavones and flavanols. It would also be beneficial if you can find a mixture with polyphenols (you've likely heard about this in relation to green tea) that feature one specific polyphenol – epigallocatechin-gallate. And yes, THAT is the one in green tea.
- Focus on adding in more fatty acids and the best fatty acid source is flax.

There are several other also possible remedies you may use, but frankly, there isn't a whole lot of research that backs up what they MAY be able to accomplish for your dog. We have not included them here, preferring to mention the herbs that have a track record.

### **What you can do at home**

Monitor food consumption. How much is being eaten and what type of food, how much water is being consumed etc. Make notes on whether he is having trouble swallowing or vomiting.

Make sure the diet is a high quality cancer diet that will help your dog get the nutrition he needs during his treatments.

The first rule for feeding a dog with cancer is to STAY AWAY FROM GRAINS! Read your dog food label: make sure the first ingredient on the list is some type of meat. You

will almost always find some grains listed, but they should be down the list a ways, not right at the top. Sorghum is better filler than corn, which is better than rice or wheat.

For a canine cancer patient, any commercial dry food should be supplemented with additional animal protein sources e.g. canned sardines (the best), cottage cheese, eggs and just about any kind of meat such as hamburger or ground turkey. High fat content is good. More important than cooked or raw is the amount of animal-based protein and fats. Dogs are primarily carnivores.

Monitor his daily bathroom habits, such as color, amount, consistency, frequency of stool, color and amount of urine, any signs of pain?

Keep him comfortable with a cozy bed and close to the family for company.

Offer bottled or filtered water.

Ensure some form of exercise as tolerated.

Groom daily to help him feel better, brushing and fussing over him is good for both of you.

If he needs help with his bathroom duties, take him out more often and wait with him.

If he has trouble doing stairs, consider adding a ramp with a gradual incline to help him get into the house.

A special treat now and then if tolerated will lift his spirits.

Give all meds as specified by your vet and don't stop them until you are told to on consultation with your vet.

Keep your dog away from toxins, chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, and second hand smoke.

Vets believe cancer has its origins due to unhealthy things in the environment such as smog or chemicals. Modern pet foods may be another problem (READ THE LABEL). You can prevent some types of cancer by giving your pets a healthy diet, letting your pets drink bottled water, treating your lawn without chemicals, and neutering your pets when they are young.

## **CAR SICKNESS**

### **Signs**

Usually this will happen when you have no towels or paper down on the seat of your vehicle. And usually happens right after a lovely large meal, which now rests in a steaming heap on your seat, lap, the floor and perhaps the window.

## **Causes**

Car sickness can arise from two different situations. The first is physical in nature and the second emotional. For some dogs the trip or motion sickness is the cause for car sickness and in other cases being sick in the car is based on fear. The distinction is - fear based when the dog thinks something nasty is going to happen at the end of the ride - shots, being kenneled or being poked and prodded at the groomers etc.

The motion sickness is genuine sickness due to the scenery whipping by outside his window. You will actually be able to tell what type of car sickness your dog suffers from by his history - meaning if he has never had a bad experience in the car (you just picked him up as a puppy from the breeder to take him home etc. or take him out regularly for rides to go for a walk) and he gets sick, chances are it's the motion. If on the other hand the only time you take your dog anywhere is to the vet for checkups and shots - that classifies as a lousy experience in his books.

## **Conventional treatment**

The usual treatment is to give Dramamine and in really tough cases tranquilizers or calmatives of some type.

## **Here are some herbals that may assist your dog's car sickness problems**

- You'll know about this one right away, ginger otherwise known as zingiber officinalis. This has a very long history of medicinal use in traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine. It also has a whole ton of research that proves its effectiveness in relieving nausea, vomiting, indigestion, gas and dizziness. Ginger boosts digestive fluids and neutralizes acids and doesn't have any side effects. It is also noted for its very high anti-inflammatory and pain relief properties.
- Mint or menthe piperita has also been used for centuries to help with indigestion, nausea and heartburn. Mint relaxes the muscles of the digestive tract and stimulates the flow of natural digestive juices and bile. It also has anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic properties.
- Kalium phosphate is known as a biochemical tissue salt effective in treating anxiety and stress, somewhat of a natural tranquilizer. Helps relieve a nervous stomach.
- Cocculus C30, a homeopathic remedy is noted for its ability to relieve travel sickness, vertigo, nausea and vomiting. And another remedy is pulsatilla vulgaris C30 used for nausea and vomiting.
- Many dog owners also swear by Bach's Rescue Remedy that contains five of the original 38 flower essences created by Dr. Bach - Impatiens; Star of Bethlehem; Cherry Plum; Rock Rose and Clematis.
- Impatiens helps your dog become more patient so that waiting is not a major five-alarm problem for them. Star of Bethlehem helps to neutralize the effects of

shock or trauma and if riding in a car is considered to be a trauma for your dog, this should help immensely. Cherry Plum gives you a self- controlled animal with the ability to act rationally. Rock Rose restores courage and calmness and the Clematis helps your dog to have a lively interest in the world around them.

### **What you can do at home**

Don't drive like Sterling Moss at the racetrack, and take it slow on sharp curves or up and down hills. Also fast starts and stops really are rough on his stomach. It's like you being shaken up while hung over. Try cracking the window open enough for some fresh air, but not enough so they can hang their head out either. Make sure your dog is not over heated or too cold either.

Driving makes the scenery go by in a whiz and the rapidly changing landscape simply nauseates some dogs. What works for some of them is to keep them secure in their own covered kennel or to have them lie down on the floor of the car. Stop every hour for a stretch and pee break, a short walk and some water.

There are quite a few pooches that suffer from car or motion sickness, especially when they are youngsters. Some do outgrow it, but until they do, you might want to make sure when you travel you do it on his empty stomach. Try not to give him any food for about 3 to 4 hours before your leave, but do give water.

Get your dog used to the car and traveling with you in short steps. Get in the car together have a treat, talk, play a bit, but don't have the car running. Do this several times and even feed your dog in the car. If he isn't willing to do that, then try feeding by the car. Once he has mastered that, then do this over again, but get in the car give him a treat, then start the car and then give him another treat. Just sit in the car and don't go anywhere. Make sure your dog is happy and relaxed before you end the session.

Now that your dog is ok in the car with it running, back down the driveway and then drive back into the garage. Give a treat and praise. Repeat this as often as you can to reinforce the positive experience. Next a trip around the block and home with treats and praise at the end of the ride. Then increase the distance until your dog can handle the whole thing with no problem. You'll need patience for this, but it's sure worth it.

## **CHEWING**

### **Signs**

Anything not nailed down is a fine choice for your dog to chew on and is one of the most frustrating things a dog does. If it's your rug, your wallpaper, your shorts or your bar of soap, it will come out looking like it lost the third world war – that is if it didn't get totally eaten in the process. Yes, imagine the mess later when they process what they ate, or the surgery bill for eating something that got stuck on the way through.

### **Causes**

Chewing is to be expected in a young puppy as that is how they relate to their world – everything goes in their mouths. They're totally oral because that is how they relate to the world around them. As they grow older one hopes this type of behavior stops or someone will have a nice dog rug on the living room wall. Kidding aside, when older dogs chew it could be for a number of reasons, and a couple of them are boredom and separation anxiety. Not to mention the fact that they may not have been properly trained when little to NOT chew your shoes, purses, boots, the cupboards and their kennel.

### **Conventional treatment**

The vet will recommend proper training for your dog to help it grow out of its habit of chewing. Basic obedience is crucial to a happy well-adjusted puppy who grows up into a delightful adult.

Treatment of physical problems, including the removal of retained baby teeth helps. But remember dogs already used to inappropriate chewing because of physical problems might continue to chew even when the problem is gone. Redirect your dog to more appropriate chewing behaviors.

Other forms of chewing need another approach. Remove temptation. Anything that might tempt your dog needs to go where your dog can't reach it. If you've taken the time to analyze what your dog is chewing on and when he's chewing it; now you need how keep those items out of his reach.

Now redirect his behavior. If your dog chews from boredom when alone, give him something to do. Many dogs like the hard rubber toys that can be filled with food or treats. Feeding your dog his meals from these toys can provide the challenge a bored dog requires. These toys are long-lasting, most will withstand chewing from even the most determined chewer (except they haven't yet met a Weimaraner), and come in many challenging shapes and styles.

Providing your dog with interactive toys can also prevent inappropriate chewing. Interactive toys include puzzle toys and moving toys that hide treats. If your dog has plenty of toys he could still be bored with them. Buy new toy for him and remove all of the others. Reintroduce them on a rotating basis, so even the old toys seem new for a time.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's chewing problems**

Many dog owners also swear by Bach's Rescue Remedy that contains five of the original 38 flower essences created by Dr. Bach - Impatiens; Star of Bethlehem; Cherry Plum; Rock Rose and Clematis. Give that a whirl and you may be on the road to having the problem "licked."

### **What you can do at home**

The other really good thing you can do is crate train your dog. Those who are suffering from separation anxiety often feel better when you are not there is they are in their own

safe space. Try an initial stay in the kennel for very short periods of time with you returning and praising and treating them. You can gradually extend your time away, but try to limit it to about 5 hours maximum.

For boredom, hit the yard and crack out the toys and play and run and chase and just have a great time. If you keep your dog's mind and sense of fun stimulated, you will have fewer problems with chewing. Most dogs need at least an hour or more a day out romping, preferably more.

Also see above is the Conventional treatment section for further tips that work.

## **CONSTIPATION**

### **Signs**

Strenuous effort to produce a bowel movement with no results, small, dry and/or hard faecal matter and long stretches of time between movements. Other signs of constipation in dogs are loss of appetite and abdominal pain.

### **Causes**

Constipation is usually due to dietary issues, where something your pet is or isn't eating is causing the problem. There could be other reasons as well.

A lack of fibre in the diet can lead to constipation, as well as a lack of fresh drinking water. Ingested foreign objects such as bones, rocks, garbage or other materials can disrupt your dog's digestive system too. Other causes could include lack of exercise, worm infestation, and underlying medical problems.

Prolonged constipation can lead to serious gastrointestinal problems, including a condition known as megacolon, where your dog is no longer able to expel faeces effectively.

### **Conventional treatment**

The most common treatment for constipation is a change in your dog's diet. If that doesn't work, then a mild laxative can be used. In some cases an enema may be needed to remove hardened stool impacted in the colon.

### **Here are some herbal remedies that may assist your dog's constipation problems**

- Psyllium nigrum husk is a really high source of dietary fibre. It's actually been used for centuries to treat colitis and ulcers plus encourage regular bowel

movements.

- Avena sativa otherwise known as oats, is made from whole wild oats. It's been traditionally used for the nervous system and is a very effective constipation remedy. Because it also has a high silica content, it has been known to aid in the building of strong bones.
- Aloe Ferox is actually a succulent with many therapeutic uses. It has a history of being used in ancient Egypt as early as 1500 BC. It's known for its beneficial effects on digestion and is a natural system cleanser and remedy for constipation.
- Natrium Muriaticum 6C is a biochemical tissue salt that helps maintain the body's water balance. It has a very crucial role in the digestive process and processing foods in a healthy manner. An imbalance of this leads to problems such as constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, indigestion, bloating and heartburn.

### **What you can do at home**

Exercise will definitely help loosen the bowels, just so long as the bowels are not impacted or blocked. Vaseline can also be used. Just spread it on your dog's paws. If these remedies don't work a trip to the Vet is definitely in order. If the bowel is impacted too long it could burst – a life threatening situation.

## **CUSHING'S DISEASE**

### **Signs**

Some of the symptoms are panting, increased thirst and appetite, loss of hair and high blood pressure. Your pet may have developed this disease as a result of taking prednisone or as the result of a tumor of the adrenal glands themselves or on the pituitary gland.

You may also see increased/excessive urination (polyuria), accidents in previously housetrained dogs, sagging, bloated, pot-bellied appearance, weight gain or its appearance, due to fat redistribution, loss of muscle mass, giving the appearance of weight loss, bony, skull-like appearance of head, exercise intolerance, lethargy, general or hind-leg weakness, new reluctance to jump on furniture or people, symmetrically thinning hair or baldness (alopecia) on torso, coat changes like dullness, dryness, slow regrowth of hair after clipping, thin, wrinkled, fragile, and/or darkly pigmented skin, easily damaged/bruised skin that heals slowly, hard, calcified lumps in the skin (calcinosis cutis), susceptibility to infections (especially skin and urinary), diabetes, pancreatitis, or seizures.

### **Causes**

Cushing's Disease is also known as hyperadrenocorticism. What that simply means is an over-production of hormones from the adrenal glands. The extra high levels of these hormones in your pet's body can cause varied and serious symptoms.

### **Conventional treatment**

Treatment depends on the type of Cushing's disease, and the overall health and age of your dog and treatment can be complicated in the older dog.

In general, surgery may be indicated for adrenal tumors. Chemotherapy in the form of Lysodren or Ketaconazole may be used to treat pituitary-dependent or adrenal-based Cushing's. And Anipryl may be tried to combat pituitary-dependent Cushing's. Treatment is perhaps best viewed as a means to improve quality of life, rather than increase lifespan.

### **Here are some of the herbal remedies that may assist your dog's Cushing disease problems**

- Taraxacum officinale, which you will know as that yellow thing that regularly grows in your lawn – the dandelion. It has a history as a tonic for the liver, kidneys and adrenal glands – helping to normalize their functioning. This is also an anti-inflammatory. Dandelion also contains vitamins and minerals important for hair growth and prevention of hair loss.
- Arctium lappa (Burdock) cleanses and helps the body eliminate toxins. It is also excellent at balancing blood sugar levels and preventing diabetes.
- Astragalus membranaceus (Huang Qi) helps to restore balance to the adrenal glands. Recent research confirms the positive effect of Astragalus on immune functioning and its ability to help your pet fight against illness and disease. It's also important for the regulation of blood pressure and blood sugar levels.
- Arsenicum (30C), which is a homeopathic remedy, is useful for treating excessive thirst and urination as well as indigestion, vomiting and other digestive problems.
- Hepar Sulph (30C), another homeopathic remedy is very effective for treating infections and healing wounds or irritated skin.
- Mercurius (30C) takes care of thirst and irritability and Sulphur (30C) will reduce thirst and improve skin condition.

### **What you can do at home**

Feed a high quality balance nutritional diet. More than anything your dog will need good nutrition now. Always read the labels of your dog food and make sure the first ingredients are meat and if there are grains in the food, make sure they are listed near the end.

Offer fresh water at all times, either bottled or filtered.



Exercise as tolerated.

Give all medications as indicated by your Vet and don't stop unless advised it is alright to do so.

Play time is important for your dog and when he starts feeling better, make sure to have a special play time for him

Spend quality time grooming him and just being with him.

As much as possible give him the normal life he was leading prior to him becoming ill. Routine is so very important for dogs that not having his usual routine will upset him.

Massage therapy can help to stimulate the immune system as can acupressure. You might also want to check out acupuncture and Bach's Rescue Remedy.

## **DENTAL PROBLEMS OR GUM DISEASE**

### **Signs**

You may see pus around the tooth or teeth and notice persistent bad breath. Your dog's gums will bleed easily and his mouth will be very sensitive. He may paw at his mouth and you will note inflamed gums that may be receding. He may also have loose or missing teeth and have lost his appetite. Your dog might also have stomach or intestinal upsets, drooling, difficulty chewing or eating and be irritable or depressed.

### **Causes**

Periodontal disease is associated with the inflammation and loss of the deep supporting structures of teeth. Food particles and bacteria collect along the gum line forming plaque.

If plaque is not removed, minerals in the saliva combine with the plaque and form tartar/calculus that adheres to the teeth. Plaque starts to mineralize 3-5 days after it forms. The tartar is irritating to the gums and causes gingivitis, a reddening of the gums adjacent to the teeth and bad breath.

If the tartar is not removed, it builds up under the gums and separates the gums from the teeth. This forms pockets and encourages even more bacterial growth. At this point the damage is irreversible, and called periodontal disease. It can be very painful and can lead to loose teeth, abscesses, and bone loss or infection.

Gum disease is the most common problem seen by vets. More than half of all pets suffer from gum disease, dental calculus or similar dental problems.

Calculus is the brown build-up of plaque found extending downwards on the tooth from the gum line. It hoards bacteria which can not only cause abscesses and tooth loss but

can even result in organ damage as the bacteria are carried from the mouth, through the bloodstream.

### **Conventional treatment**

Treatment depends upon the grade of the problem. Many times your dog will be started on antibiotics before the scheduled dental procedures. Your dog will be anesthetized and monitored during the procedure.

- Grade I or II: A routine dental cleaning and polishing. The plaque and tartar build-up are removed from the teeth, above and below the gum line, with handheld and ultrasonic scalers. The teeth are polished to remove microscopic scratches. The full mouth is checked for any disease. Fluoride may be applied.
- Grade III and IV: After the teeth are scaled, probing and dental radiology is performed in to select the appropriate treatment. Treatment options are root planeing and subgingival curettage, periodontal debridement, gingivectomy, periodontal surgery, special therapeutics, and tooth extraction.
- Root planeing: removing residual calculus and diseased cementum or dentin, and smoothing the root surface.
- Subgingival curettage: removes diseased epithelium and connective tissue. This is a difficult procedure.
- Periodontal debridement: irritants to the tooth and root surface (bacteria and endotoxins) produced by the bacteria are removed by special ultrasonic scalers.
- Gingivectomy: excess gingiva is removed. The area between this excess tissue and the tooth is a perfect habitat for bacteria.
- Periodontal surgery: These surgeries involve opening a flap of the gingiva over the root of the tooth to be able to reach the deeper structures.
- Special therapeutics: include artificial materials that can be placed inside the pockets to stimulate bone and periodontal growth. Some include antibiotics that are released for several weeks after the application.
- Tooth extraction: In some cases, a tooth cannot be saved or the owner elects not to have other procedures performed. In these cases, tooth extraction is the only alternative.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's dental problems**

- Arthrospira platenis (Spirulina), found in the sea, is an outstanding source of chlorophyll plus is also contains high concentrations of protein, vitamins and carotenoids. It makes Vitamin A available for use in the body which helps maintain healthy eyes, teeth and immune systems.

- Equisetum arvense (Horsetail) is an effective tissue healer thanks to its high silica content. Silica maintains healthy and strong teeth, skin, bones, claws and fur and is the main component in all connective body tissues.
- Taraxacum officinale (Dandelion) is super rich in Vitamin A, D, C, various B Vitamins, iron, lecithin, silicon, potassium, magnesium, zinc and manganese, all essential for not only the digestive system, but the bones, teeth and gums.
- Silica (6c) is known by the terminology the homeopathic surgeon. Why? It has the ability to cleanse the cells of toxins and rid the body of bad odors. This is present in the body naturally, but when there is a deficiency, silica (6c), a biochemical salt is used for gum disease, mouth ulcers and chronic mucous infections. It also acts as a natural cleanser and purifier eliminating all foreign matter in the body. Note: don't use this with pets who have any type of metal plates, pins or artificial tubes in the body.
- Calc. Fluor. (6C) (Calcium fluoride), another biochemical salt, is vitally important for teeth, skin and bones, not to mention teething pain and toothaches.
- Calc. Phos. (6C) is used for healthy teeth and gums and more so when teeth are growing and developing. This is excellent in improving circulation, bones and teeth.

### **What you can do at home**

Brushing your pet's teeth to remove plaque before it becomes tartar. Brushing will not remove tartar that has already developed.

Here is how to brush your dog's teeth by taking it in slow and easy steps. Get your pet used to having its mouth handled. Take time and have patience! Use love and praise and if he fusses, play with him, try again and praise him when you are successful.

Once your pet allows you to handle his muzzle, gently rub your finger along their teeth and gums. Use chicken fat or cheese or even peanut butter on your finger. That gets his attention right smart.

When your dog is used to that start using a washcloth or gauze pad on your finger to rub along the teeth and gums. The next step would be to use a soft toothbrush to brush the teeth. There are several veterinary brushes available and pediatric human brushes suited to animal use.

A circular motion is the best, but just back and forth may be easier. Your dog's tongue will keep the inside surfaces of his teeth clean, so you only need to do the outside surfaces. **DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE**, baking soda or hydrogen peroxide. Ask your vet what they recommend, as there is an extensive selection of pastes, washes and gels on the market made specifically for your dog.

If you just can't get the hang of it, then you can try an oral spray (or gel) that is an antiplaque agent. If you are not able to do anything, you should have your pet's teeth professionally cleaned and polished every 6 to 12 months as needed

Diet can be a factor in the development of periodontal disease. Soft or sticky foods cling to the surface of teeth and promote plaque formation. Feeding dry food helps reduce the amount of plaque and tartar but it will not eliminate it. Raw vegetables if your dog will tolerate them (carrots), rawhides, and other chew things that have a massaging action on the gums will help.

Note: Do not feed real bones or cow hooves. These are so hard that they can break teeth.

## **DIAHRREA**

### **Signs**

When the number of stools your dog passes are looser and more watery than normal.

### **Causes**

Diarrhea is caused by inflammation of the intestine (enteritis). It may happen at the same time as vomiting, (gastroenteritis) or by itself.

This can be related to something they have eaten, a viral infection, bacterial infection, worms, a foreign object they have swallowed or diseases affecting other organs such as the liver or kidneys.

### **Conventional treatment**

As long as your dog is eating and alert, there is no cause for alarm. Unless there is vomiting, feed a normal amount of food divided into four or five small servings given at intervals throughout the day. Give Pepto Bismol every six to eight hours - a small terrier-sized dog gets one half teaspoonful at a time, a Labrador-sized dog two teaspoonfuls.

Feed this bland diet or another one that your vet may recommend. Mix one and a half cups of cooked white rice with one half cup of cottage cheese or lean ground round that has been thoroughly cooked and the fat drained. Remove the liquid from cottage cheese by squeezing it between several layers of paper towel.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's diarrhea problems**

Consult your Vet or herbalist for the best way to administer these remedies.

- Plantago Major (Plantain) is used to maintain a healthy digestive system and mucous membranes.

- Alchemilla Vulgaris (Lady's Mantle) is considered to be an astringent, meaning it decreases secretions. It also contains tannins that form a protective layer on the lining of the digestive tract. This herb has been used since the Middle Ages to maintain healthy firm stools.
- Podophyllum (6C) for profuse, explosive, watery diarrhea usually preceded by gurgles and rumblings.
- Sulphur (6C) useful for upset stomachs associated with urgent, pressing bowel movements.
- Arsen alb. (6C) effective in treating diarrhea that may be the result of nervousness - a good remedy for high strung pets

### **What you can do at home**

Do not feed your dog anything other than the bland diet for at least two days. Then start his regular food in small portions and frequently throughout the day. Monitor how he does by checking his stools.

When your dog is feeling better, make sure he is eating a balanced, high quality diet with plenty of raw and unprocessed foods if you are able to provide that. Diarrhea problems often respond to a change in diet, but it must be done slowly and carefully to not overload his system.

If flatulence is a companion problem with the diarrhea, bear with your dog as his system gets itself back to normal health. You might ask your vet about acidophilus, a probiotic that may help normalize the colon's normal bacteria etc.

Keep your dog well supplied with clean fresh drinking water – filtered or bottled.

Try to keep emotional and physical stress to a minimum while he is sick (and in general) as both these things can have an adverse effect on his digestion.

Avoid foods that are high in sugar.

Regular exercise will help to keep your pet healthy and fit .

## **9 MANAGEMENT OF COMMON**

# ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY E– F

## EPILEPSY/SEIZURES

### Signs

There are a number of different types of seizures, ranging from generalized to focal motor seizures.

A generalized seizure (grand mal, fit or convulsion) generally causes an acute decrease in state of consciousness, repeated movements of the body, excessive salivation, vomiting and often a loss of bladder and bowel control. It is generally followed by drowsiness, difficulty walking or seeing as well as changes in behavior which can last around 24 hours.

A focal motor seizure will cause just a repeated twitching movement in either the face or limbs and usually only lasts a few seconds. These seizures may be unnoticed if they involve innocuous movements like swallowing.

### Causes

Seizures occur due to a change in the electrical activity of the brain caused by a variety of things - diseases of the nervous system and the brain itself such as epilepsy. They may also be from a blow to the head, chemicals, poisons, fever and/or nutrient deficiencies.

Here are things most commonly trigger seizures. However every pet is **different and sensitive to different things**. These factors will not always apply to every dog. They are listed just for your knowledge.

- Hair spray - Do not spray when pet is in the same room
- Wool - Wool blankets, wool sofas, etc
- Heartworm pills - A seizure may occur 1 to 1 ½ wks. after administering heartworm medication
- Cigarette smoke
- Environmental Pollution from chemical plants
- BHA - A preservative commonly used in dog foods
- BHT - A preservative commonly used in dog foods
- Sodium nitrate – Research shows sodium nitrate causes severe seizures. Sodium nitrate is found in many foods we eat. Read the ingredient labels carefully.
- Carpet powders
- Air fresheners

- Fabric softeners - If exposed to clothes that have fabric softener on them
- Dryer sheets - If exposed to clothes that have been in the dryer with the dryer sheets
- Salt, Ferrous Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Calcium Iodate, Monosodium Glutamate - in excess
- Sugar - Sucrose, corn syrup, molasses, cane sugar
- Low quality commercial dog biscuits and treats
- Low quality dry food and canned food
- Plastic bowls or cheap ceramic bowls - All plastics release some undetectable fumes, especially when heated. This out-gassing means the fumes can pass into the foods that are served or stored in the bowl or container. Stainless steel or glass bowls are recommended
- Fumes from all bathroom cleaners, bleach, dusting products
- Household cleaners - Pine cleaners should be avoided
- All toxic flea products - If the product states "Hazardous To Humans And Domestic Animals", it is hazardous to your pet
- Toxic shampoos
- Toxic flea collars
- Dust - Change air filters once a month, and wash curtains twice yearly
- Crabgrass
- Mold
- Eating cat or dog feces
- Stress
- Vaccinations
- Lyme vaccine
- Lyme encephalitis
- Rabies vaccine.
- Head trauma
- Worm infestation
- Lead - dogs lick lead because it tastes sweet, and lead poisoning can result from licking or eating wood chips on which there is lead paint. You can check this by asking for a lead poisoning test when you get a regular blood test. You have to ask for this test because it is not a normal part of blood work.
- Paint fumes
- Paint chips from lead based paint
- Excessive exercise
- Overheating
- Abuse or neglect
- Rawhides - Many are dipped in a solution of salt and bleach
- Cheap painted pet toys
- Loud noises - Yelling, fighting, doorbell ringing
- Scented candles
- Vitamins with high sodium level
- Inconsistent routine
- FALL - Research shows more seizures occur in the fall due to mold and bacteria the air
- Blinking lights - Christmas lights, bright lights, etc.
- Pine cleaners

- Red food dye
- Ethoxyquin
- Fungi, Bacteria and Germs
- Hereditary Factors

### **Conventional treatment**

Phenobarbital, potassium bromide, keppra, felbamate, primidone, and gabapenten. All these drugs while effective do have a high risk of causing liver damage. Discuss all these options with your vet quite thoroughly to see what can be done in terms of alternative medications or along the lines of using the least amount of medication possible to achieve good results.

The drug of choice is most often phenobarbital, but a drug is generally chosen based on the nature of the seizures and the symptoms of your dog.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's seizure problems**

- Passiflora incarnata (Passionflower) is used extensively for anxiety and stress. It is also highly effective when it comes to calming an over stimulated nervous system. This essence then both prevents and treats seizures particularly when stress triggers them.
- Scutellaria laterifolia (Skullcap) is a noted antispasmodic herb and one that effectively calms. It lowers fever and regulates the blood pressure, both triggers for seizures.
- Hyoscyamus (30C), a homeopathic remedy is used in the treatment of acute and long-term seizures and tic disorders. Another well known remedy for seizure control is Belladonna (30C).
- Cuprum metallicum (30C) controls seizures and takes care of any mental dullness or vomiting.

### **What you can do at home**

Have a prevention plan in place as a simple method of boosting the level of nutrition in addition to making lifestyle changes.

Rule out other health problems such as Thyroid, Diabetes, Cancer, Liver or Kidney disease. A health problem may be triggering seizures.

Poor nutrition is noted as a direct cause of many diseases. Once again, always read the labels of the food you are feeding your dog. He needs a well-balanced and nutritious diet to keep him in optimal shape.



Research has shown that a poor quality diet that is loaded with chemicals, fillers, stabilizers, coloring agents, sodium and by-products will often lead to allergies, nervousness, hypertension, diabetes, weight problems, dry skin, and many other common ailments.

You could try a homemade diet but this does not always fit into lifestyle. If this is the case, it is critical to choose a high quality dry commercial food.

Know how to read labels, and the history of the company making the pet food. Look for healthy ingredients that are useful to your pet's body and a good track record from the company making it.

Eliminate toxins in the house, yard and on your dog. Many household cleaners contain formaldehyde (embalming solution), which could cause severe irritation to eyes, throat and skin. Some floor polishes contain chemicals that can cause cancer as well as damage to the heart, kidneys, liver and central nervous system. Keep your dog in a well-ventilated area when cleaning.

Flea collars, flea sprays, air fresheners, carpet powders and yard control products are not recommended to be anywhere near your dog because they are considered to be toxic.

Exercise is the magic key to good health for your dog. It develops muscles, helps with digestion and in general improves their overall health. Exercising burns fat and increases your dog's metabolism.

Shoot for at least an hour of exercise every day except if your age is older is in poor health and the weather is really bad. Older pets do need exercise, but should not be over exercised. Dogs suffer from exhaustion just like humans do.

What do you do when a seizure occurs? If you have any forewarning give about one tablespoon of honey. For a smaller dog use one teaspoon. In a great many situations this will lessen the severity of the seizure. Stay calm or you being upset will upset your dog and make the seizure last longer. Turn off all lights, TV and music. Take your dog to a quiet dark room and hold him, talking to him comfortingly and positively.

## **EAR INFECTIONS**

### **Signs**

Ear infections trouble many dogs and chances are yours will have at least one infection over its lifetime. However, they are usually fairly easy to clear up. You can usually tell if your dog has an ear infection if you see or smell any one of the following signs: agitated shaking of the head and it is cocked to one side, lots of ear flapping going on, scratching or rubbing ears and face, discharge/bleeding from ears, foul smell from ears, sensitive ears and just cranky in general.

If the infection reaches the middle ear, your dog may have a head tilt, a lack of balance, and unusual eye movements.

### **Causes**

You will usually see over-production of wax that occurs in response to irritation. Allergic skin disease affecting the ears is one possible cause particularly if the infection keeps recurring. Other causes are ear mites, yeast, foreign bodies (such as grass, bugs or foxtails), or hair growth deep in the canal (common in poodles and schnauzers). The wax moisture promotes bacterial growth and infection and soon the wax in the ears is joined by pus.

### **Conventional treatment**

Most ear infections can be handled with a professional cleaning followed by medication at home. If only mild debris is present, simple disinfection and washing may be adequate. In most cases however, a full ear flush is needed to even examine the eardrum under sedation. The reason for sedation is the ears are sore and if they jerk at the wrong time the examining instruments can cause damage to the ear

Some dogs have chronic ear problems and in these instances, the ear discharge should be cultured to pinpoint the problem and treat it specifically. Allergy is the most common reason for recurring ear infections.

Depending on the severity of the problem, the vertical canal may need to be opened surgically. This prevents severe scarring after prolonged medical therapy has been ineffective.

If the canal becomes so scarred that it is practically closed, the entire ear canal is removed and healthy tissue is allowed to grow in. This procedure is last resort in nature after all else has failed. Although surgery is expensive, dogs usually require no further ear treatment for the rest of their lives.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's ear infection**

- Melaleuca alternifolia is also known as Tea Tree Oil and it is widely used for external inflammation and used to treat various skin conditions. It is anti-bacterial and anti-fungal and has remarkable healing properties. Soothes and reduces inflammation in the ear and treats infection.
- Rosmarinus officinale (Rosemary) is a noted topical pain reliever, antiseptic and disinfectant herb. There are also other compounds in rosemary that have anti-inflammatory properties.
- Calendula officinalis (Marigold) is used to treat skin problems and it also helps to heal wounds. Anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal. Helps to regenerate damaged skin tissue.

- Verbascum thapsus another anti-inflammatory and antiseptic herb. Promotes skin healing when applied topically. Has a long history of use for ear conditions and in ear drops.

### **What you can do at home**

Regular treatment at home with disinfecting ear washes should become part of the pet's grooming routine.

Apple cider vinegar and **warm** water in a 50/50 solution can be syringed into the affected ear, gently massaged deep in the ear canal, then wipe out the ear with a cotton ball. Do this once or twice daily for at least a week and then weekly for maintenance.

Keep your dog's ears as clean as you can and always check the weekly when you groom your dog.

Nutrition is important, and your dog should be getting a well-balanced and nutritional diet that does not have ingredients in it that may cause him health difficulties.

Offer fresh water at all times (bottled or filtered).

Keep his immune system in top shape with regular exercise.

Many dogs that have ears that flop over are made that way by Mother Nature to keep bugs and debris out of their ears. Cropping ears and leaving the canal wide open is not always a good practice.

## **ENERGY**

### **Signs**

Energy or lack of it rather is sometimes a problem with your pet. What causes lack of energy? Well a wide variety of things does and if it seems to be a prevailing problem, it would be best if you took the time to consult a Vet.

### **Causes**

Some of the cause for lack of energy are depression, boredom, obesity, nutritional deficiency, inadequate/inappropriate diet, liver disease, intestinal worms, hypothyroidism, diabetes, poisoning, anemia, kidney failure and heatstroke. Quite the lot of causes!

### **Conventional treatment**

Treatment usually consists of running a battery of tests to determine if there is some kind of disease present. If there is, then the treatment of choice will be started.

For boredom the owner is usually advised to mentally stimulate the dog through a variety of toys, games, play time and lots of exercise.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's energy problems**

- Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian Ginseng) related to Panax ginseng this herb has been with us for thousands of years in traditional Chinese medicine and used to enhance the vital energy of the body, plus sharpen physical and mental performance.
- Rosmarinus officinalis (Rosemary) helps promote good circulation and is an excellent energizer.
- Arthrospira platenis(Spirulina) found in the sea is used as a source of chlorophyll and is used for its nutritive properties. Contains high concentrations of protein, vitamins B12 and folic acid and carotenoids. An excellent energy booster.
- Emblica officinalis(Amalaki) an Ayurvedic remedy, helps rejuvenate your dog's energy and combats aging and decay. It's also a very rich source of Vitamin C.

### **What you can do at home**

What you can do at home pretty much depends on what kind of a diagnosis you do or don't get from your vet after test results are back. If the results show a disease of some sort, then follow the course of treatment recommended. If there is no disease, first celebrate and then find creative ways to have fun with your "bored" dog.

Diet is still the major consideration when dealing with your dog for anything from boredom to diabetes. Check the labels on the food you are giving him and then start asking questions about what you are feeding your dog. Poor nutrition is the leading cause of most diseases in dog (and other animals). You wouldn't eat a lousy diet and expect to stay healthy would you? Then you can't expect your dog to eat a less than optimum diet and keep his health and good spirits.

Exercise is crucial to a healthy dog, one that is happy and well-adjusted.

Talk him for more walks in different places, play hide and seek or other tag and tug games. Stimulate his mind and engage his sense of play. You will see a different dog as a result.

Hide treats in his blanket and watch him try to find them. Get a hard rubber Kong and stuff it with peanut butter or cheese and let him have at it. They love toys and puzzles.

Don't leave your best pal tied up in the back yard all day every day. The end result is a very unhappy and destructive dog.

## **EYE INFECTIONS**

### **Signs**

Eye infection in the surrounding structures of the eye are common usually involving the conjunctiva, leading to conjunctivitis or pink eye. The most common eye problems are Conjunctivitis, Keratitis, "Cherry eye", Scleritis, Uveitis, cataracts and glaucoma.

### **Causes**

The causes can be bacterial, viruses like the Herpes virus, foreign material or irritants in the eye etc.

### **Conventional treatment**

Treatment usually involves corticosteroids, or other anti-inflammatory drugs for pain relief - as well as eye drops or ointments and topical or oral antibiotics.

In the case of external eye diseases such as conjunctivitis, keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) and superficial corneal ulcers, eyedrops containing an antibacterial agent are often prescribed. Several drops a day over several days are required.

To overcome the disadvantage of repeated instillations of eye drops daily, scientists have developed a soluble bio-adhesive ophthalmic drug insert (BODI) that can be placed in the lower cul de sac of the eye. This reduces the treatment to a single application and improves the efficiency of the treatment.

Dermatitis treatment involves tear stimulants and anti-inflammatories. Eye ulcers are often associated with this eye disease and may require surgery.

Cherry eye treatment is surgical replacement of the gland.

Scleritis may result from an underlying parasitic disease, such as toxoplasmosis or lyme disease. It is often treated with steroids. Can result in the loss of the eye.

Uveitis may result from an underlying parasitic disease, such as toxoplasmosis. Often treated with steroids. Can result in the loss of the eye.

Glaucoma deserves the same emergency status as a dog that has been hit by a car. It is an elevation of pressure in the eyeball because an obstruction prevents fluids in the eye from flowing out. There must be rapid reduction of pressure in the eye before permanent blindness occurs. Medical therapy must be started immediately.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's eye problems**

- *Arctium lappa* (Burdock) is noted for its ability to cleanse and eliminate toxins from the body. It also kicks up the immune system and is very helpful in treating dry eyes and eye infections.
- *Rosmarinus officinalis* (Rosemary) is a topical antiseptic/disinfectant and pain-relieving herb with anti-inflammatory effects.
- *Chelidonium majus* boosts the immune system and combats infections. Actually sharpens the sight, promotes healing and acts as a painkiller.
- *Filipendula ulmaria* (Meadowsweet) was used by the ancient Druids for its astringent, antiseptic and anti-inflammatory abilities. Soothes and helps heal eye infections and infections of the conjunctiva.

### **What you can do at home**

Feed a high quality balance nutritional diet is the very best thing you can do for your dog. More than anything your dog will need good nutrition now. Always read the labels of your dog food and make sure the first ingredients are meat and if there are grains in the food, make sure they are listed near the end. Search the Internet or ask your Vet about good quality commercial dog foods.

Offer fresh water at all times, either bottled or filtered and make sure it is in a stainless steel bowl not plastic. Plastic leaks fumes especially when warm and this seeps into either the food or the water.

Exercise as tolerated. If you have to start off slowly with your dog, then just take short walks to get him back into his regular routine.

Give all medications as indicated by your Vet and don't stop unless advised it is alright to do so. Make sure you know what each drug is supposed to do for your dog, and any side effects for them (herbal or conventional) that you may need to know about.

Play time is important for your dog and when he starts feeling better, make sure to have a special play time for him

Spend quality time grooming him and just being with him. When you are grooming or just cuddling, check his eyes for any signs of problems.

Stick to his regular routine as dogs thrive and do best with a regular routine.

## **FEVER**

### **Signs**

Fever frequently indicates the presence of infection. It's good to have a higher temperature because it slows down the growth of the bugs. Problem is your dog can stop drinking and become dehydrated. So, make sure you offer them fresh water and encourage them to drink. If they persist in not drinking and they still have a fever after 24 hours, call your Vet. Look for hot ears, rather over bright glazed eyes and hard panting in the house, depression, trying to find a cool place to lay and elevated heart and respiration rates.

### **Causes**

The most common causes for fever in dogs are bacterial and viral infections. E.g. distemper, hepatitis, skin abscesses, pyometra, respiratory infections, heat stroke, eclampsia, cancer etc. There are many more possible causes, too numerous to list here.

### **Conventional treatment**

Blood tests, cultures, endoscopy, ultrasound, urinalysis, and x-rays to find the cause of the fever.

If an infection is suspected antibiotics are given. Fluids may be administered either subcutaneously or intravenously if your dog hasn't been able to drink enough fluids or eat enough to stay hydrated. This is critical therapy for pets who will not eat or drink as dogs that do not eat or drink can not be nursed at home, they need vet care.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's fever**

Most of the following herbs have a sweat inducing property, so you definitely need to make sure water is on hand. The herbs rid the body of the toxins making your dog ill and keep the fever from going too high. Thus, the healing is accomplished and the fever breaks.

Angelica, elderberry, rosemary, yarrow and aconite would all fit the bill and are all considered to be sweat-inducing herbs otherwise called diaphoretic. Of course you need to also support the immune system with immune boosters that we've already read about, Echinacea, licorice, chamomile, goldenseal or Oregon grape. You can also boost your pet's intake of Vitamin C and flavonoids.

### **What you can do at home**

As we mentioned earlier, if your dog is dehydrated, you will need to take him to the vet for fluid therapy. This can not be done at home.

Once your pet is hydrated and able to eat and drink without help, you can start feeding him small amounts of food frequently during the day. A few special treats when he is

really showing signs of improvement to cheer him up won't hurt. But not fatty treats, good homemade treats with a nice crunch and a flavor your dog loves.

Gradually start his exercise routine again. Go slowly at first, a few short walks a day until he is up to full bounce mode.

Stick to his pre-illness routine and get right back into it as soon as you can.

Take a good hard look at what you are feeding him. Read the labels, ask your friends what they feed, do some research on the Internet. The BEST diet you can possibly give your best buddy is a homemade raw diet. However, this may not be possible due to your lifestyle. There are many commercial dry dog foods on the market that will however meet your dog's nutritional requirements and have protein as the first ingredient and very few if ANY grains listed later.

Massage is always a good thing to give your dog, fever or not, sick or not. It's a good bonding experience and it stimulates his immune system naturally.

Look for other things that will stimulate his immune system and build it up. For instance some of the herbal remedies have great benefits for immune systems.

## **FLATULENCE/GAS**

### **Signs**

This is one of those "dog" things you can't possibly miss. It's either loud and obnoxious, or silent and deadly. Farts can't be missed as they frequently have a very bad odor.

Gas production or accumulation in the gastrointestinal tract is normal. However, in certain gastrointestinal diseases, the normal production of gas may be increased and excessive flatulence may result. Nearly all gas comes from either swallowed air (aerophagia) or from air produced by bacterial fermentation and processing of ingested nutrients. Over 99 percent of gas is odorless, and less than 1 percent accounts for the odor we often associate with flatulence. A fact which many dog owners may wish to dispute.

### **Causes**

Gas is generally caused by a build-up of gas in the stomach or intestines, which is often caused by undigested fermenting food or a food sensitivity. Some dogs will gulp air with their food, which then emerges as intestinal gas. Flatulence is often accompanied by bloating, abdominal pain, belching and wind, and you can bet your dog isn't having a lot of fun with it either.

Aerophagia (swallowing air) occurs most often from eating quickly or gulping during eating.



Diets that are high in soybean or fiber, spoiled food, and/or overeating increase the amount of gas produced by the intestinal bacteria and increase the amount of flatulence.

Dietary intolerance or allergy may induce gastrointestinal signs that include any combination of vomiting, diarrhea, and flatulence.

Malabsorptive disorders (difficulty absorbing nutrients) and maldigestive disorders (poor digestion of food) result in flatulence by altering bacterial fermentation and food processing.

Inflammatory bowel disease is an inflammation of the walls of the intestines. Vomiting, diarrhea, flatulence, poor appetite, and weight loss are common clinical signs.

Gastrointestinal cancer, such as lymphosarcoma and others may cause flatulence.

Infections of the intestines with viruses, bacteria, parasites may increase gas production, but this is often overlooked because of the significant vomiting and diarrhea they also produce.

Constipation is the infrequent or difficult passage of feces. It is occasionally associated with flatulence.

### **Conventional treatment**

The vet will usually take a complete history that might pinpoint and food or eating patterns that may be responsible for the gas. Then your dog would receive a thorough physical exam that might help identify any other signs of gastrointestinal disease.

Initial diagnostic tests are a complete blood count, a biochemical profile and a urinalysis, along with multiple fecal exams, and abdominal x-rays.

Simethicone, a substance found in many over the counter antacids that absorbs and eliminates gas, can be helpful in some animals.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's gas problems**

- Some herbals that may help Fido fluff less ferociously are Pimpinella anisum (anise) a virtual old standby for centuries used to treat digestive upsets and cramps. Anise helps relieve gas.
- Foeniculum vulgare aka fennel helps with gas and bloating and also works like a digestive aid. Stops rumbling stomachs and helps to detox your system.
- Magnesium Phosphate C6(Mag.Phos.) a biochemical tissue salt helps with gas, heartburn, nausea and colic. Often given for spastic bowel and irritable bowel syndrome.

- Carbo veg C30 a homeopathic remedy for gas and indigestion. It's a natural purifier and can absorb gases and toxins in the body. Very effective for dogs who suffer from upset stomachs, belching, breaking wind and bloating.
- Nux Vom. C30 is another homeopathic remedy often used for upset stomachs and constipation and diarrhea. Effective from gas, abdominal cramping and bloating.
- Other things you can do to help your dog are change his food to a higher protein based food, feed him smaller meals more frequently to allow him time to digest his meal and add acidophilus to his meals.

### **What you can do at home**

Institute all feeding and dietary recommendations as directed by your veterinarian. Remove any possible causes of the flatulence, such as exposure to garbage and certain food.

Discourage rapid ingestion of food by feeding smaller, more frequent meals. Dogs that gulp their food should be fed alone. The food may also be separated into small quantities that are given in different bowls or locations, or released slowly by an automatic dispenser.

Do not allow your dog access to spoiled food. Keep him confined to the house or yard and supervise all outdoor activities. Create an environment that does not allow your dog access to garbage or trash.

Change your pet's diet to one that is low in fiber and easily digested.

## **FLEAS**

### **Signs**

Fleas are an extremely common parasite in dogs. Some aren't bothered by them, but many develop an allergic reaction to flea saliva, leading to flea bite dermatitis. Flea saliva contains around 15 different allergens that can cause reactions in sensitive dogs and cats.

### **Causes**

These little bugs are really hard to see and move so fast you could get whiplash trying to track them. Don't look for the bug, look for clues the bug leaves behind.

If your dog scratches, bites at his rear end especially around his tail or the inside or outside of his thighs, fleas are a possibility.

Flea dirt looks like sprinkled pepper on the dog. If you drop some of this dirt or what looks like pepper, onto a damp paper towel and it turns reddish, it's fleas.

When flea bites your dog, proteins in the insect's saliva can cause an immune system that causes itching. Depending on the type of cell involved (mast cells, basophils, or T-lymphocytes in the blood) and the type of chemicals released, the irritation can begin immediately, in five-to-six hours or in 24-48 hours or a combination of the three. All this from one single bite.

Small red raised bumps on the base of the tail and along the outside of the back legs, self-induced scratches, and thickened skin on the base of the tail are all signs of chronic flea allergy. The diagnosis can be confirmed with an intradermal skin allergy test.

### **Conventional treatment**

The new generation of controls includes natural or genetically engineered pyrethrum (a daisy)

Flea-specific growth inhibitors (products containing fenoxycarb or methoprene)

An environmental control that desiccates fleas and larvae

A once-a-month pill (Program) that prevents the formation of chitin, the flea's external body covering

New surface products applied to the dog's skin or coat (Advantage and Frontline).

Unlike the toxic insecticides in products such as Spoton, Proban, and Prospot, the ingredients in Frontline and Advantage are not absorbed into the bloodstream and are toxic only to fleas, not to dogs or their owners.

Program, Frontline, and Advantage are available only through veterinarians; all other flea controls can be purchased over-the-counter in pet supply stores or catalogs. Buyer beware!!!!

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's flea problems**

- Matricaria recutita (German Chamomile) often considered to be one of the nine sacred herbs given to the world, this herb is used as a gentle cleansing, anti-inflammatory preparation.
- Galium aperiene (Cleavers) has been with us for centuries and is a noted cleansing tonice and lymphatic cleanser and blood purifier. If used regularly, it expels toxins from the body and helps heal chronic skin conditions such as allergic dermatitis.
- Calendula officinalis (Marigold) is an anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal. Good for treating wounds and helps to regenerate damaged skin tissue.

- Hamamelis virginianum (Witchhazel) very well known for reducing inflammation, bleeding and pain. Native Americans have used this for centuries to relieve pain, swelling, bruising and bleeding of external injuries. Anti-bacterial.
- Graphites (30C) good for skin ailments like chronic skin sores, dermatitis, slow healing wounds and scar tissue. Used to treat dry and cracked skin.

### **What you can do at home**

Toss all your dog's bedding and start over when the flea infestation is dealt with on your dog.

Do not use flea collars, dips, powders, sprays at the same time. Most of these products are considered to be highly toxic, so try to avoid them.

Vacuum literally everything in your home from carpets to drapes from upholstery to furniture. Dispose of the bags immediately by sealing them in a plastic bag to make sure no fleas escape. Repeat this procedure on a regular basis.

Wash all bedding (yours) in the hottest possible water. This will kill off any fleas hiding there and their eggs. Make sure to vacuum the mattress as well.

You could try a flea bomb sometimes called an indoor fogger. The decision is yours. Most flea bombs require your home be thoroughly aired out after Treatment. In addition you'll need to wash any residue off of surfaces such as countertops and cupboards, and vacuum thoroughly once more. You may want to consider any human allergies if you go this route.

# 10

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY

### H– K

#### HAIR AND FUR LOSS

##### **Signs**

You may see any of the following indications of hair and fur loss, or impending hair and fur loss. You may see an abscess where hair loss has started about the edges, and if not treated correctly it will scar. See section A for abscesses. You may see eczema, allergic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, dandruff, fur/hair loss, and seborrhea. All of these signs, other than the actual hair falling out can lead to loss of hair/fur.

##### **Causes**

Toxins are eliminated through the skin, and skin and coat problems can often indicate a number of underlying concerns including toxin overload, anxiety, thyroid problems and a compromised immune system. Certainly there are other causes for skin and coat problems that result in hair and fur loss such as a bacterial or fungal infection, and possibly fleas (see section F for Fleas). Your dog may also have dietary allergies or an allergy to another irritant e.g. commercial pet shampoos or flea prevention medications.

##### **Conventional Treatment**

###### **For hair loss caused by fleas**

Apply a topical flea-control medicine such as Advantage or Frontline.

###### **For hair loss caused by allergic itching (canine atrophy)**

Antihistamines, topical shampoos used weekly or biweekly, anti-inflammatory topical ointments, bathing agents that keep bacteria and yeast in check, tranquilizers that lessen itching and cortisone-like products.

###### **For hair loss due to hot spots (further discussion this section later)**

A topical astringent/cortisone agent, often with an injection of an anti-inflammatory drug. Antibiotics usually not required.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's hair/fur loss**

- Equisetum arvense (Horsetail) has been used in Western and Chinese medicine for centuries and is noted for its positive resolution of urinary tract conditions. It is also a very effective tissue healer thanks to its high silica content. Promotes healthy bones, claws, skin and hair/fur.
- Taraxacum officinalis (Dandelion) has a beneficial effect on the liver and digestive system. Enhances liver and gall bladder functions. Very rich source of vitamins and minerals such as Vitamin A, D, C, various B Vitamins, iron, lecithin, silicon, potassium, magnesium, zinc and manganese.
- Arthrospira platenis (Spirulina) which is chalk full of chlorophyll and contains very high concentrations of protein, vitamins (including B12 and folic acid) and carotenoids. A really good immune system booster.
- Fucus vesiculosus is a rather cool vegetable that comes from the sea and offers a remarkable concentrated source of minerals such as iodine, potassium, magnesium, calcium and iron. Iodine of course helps in the production of thyroid hormones necessary to maintain healthy cell metabolism. Using this regularly improves skin and coat condition.
- Kalium Sulphate (Kali. Sulph.) a biochemical tissue salt that helps carry oxygen through the body and keeps cell membranes in top shape. It helps to clear eczema and fungal skin infections.

### **What you can do at home**

What you can do is make sure you brush your dog's coat on a regular basis to release protective oils that keep his coat healthy. Do not over immunize as this can cause numerous problems later. Make sure you speak to a Vet about this.

Stay away from chemicals and toxins and eliminate exposure to cigarettes as these can contribute to and cause skin (and eye) irritations.

Read the label on your shampoo for pets, it might be irritating your pet. Try switching brands. Do NOT use human shampoo on pets.

Speak to your Vet about a good safe, holistic flea prevention program.

For a nice shiny coat try a tablespoon of olive oil added to their food about twice a week. Do NOT over do this or you will cause the runs. Of course also make sure the diet they are on is healthy and nutritious. Read pet food labels like you were the one who was going to eat it.

Stick to filtered/bottled water and not water with chlorine or fluoride in it. Use glass, stainless steel or porcelain dishes NOT plastic.

Exercise, exercise, exercise.

## **HEART PROBLEMS**

### **Signs**

Some of the signs you would see if your pet has heart problems are that he tires more easily than normal and may have a low pitched deep cough. Breathing may be labored and you might notice coughing during the night or after exercise.

There may also be some fluid retention in the legs and abdomen, a bluish cast or look to the tongue and gums and this may also be accompanied by weight loss.

### **Causes**

There are a variety of causes for these signs, so it's always best to consult with a Vet. They could be caused by a heart murmur, high cholesterol or blood pressure, a thickening of the heart muscle, heart failure, and irregular pulse or anemia.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Conventional treatment usually involves medication including diuretics to control the sodium and water retention that accompanies heart failure; vasodilators used to lower blood pressure and digoxin and related drugs to help the heart beat more efficiently

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's heart problems**

- *Crateagus oxycantha* (Hawthorn) works by dilating blood vessels which increases the heart's energy supply. It also improves its pumping ability by blocking the action of ACE – a blood constricting enzyme (angiotensin converting enzyme). Hawthorne also protects against damage due to plaque build up in the coronary arteries.
- *Arnica montana* (D3) is effective for treating an older heart, angina or artery disease. It is to be given internally.
- *Kalium Phosphate* (C6) (Kali. phos.) helps dogs with heart palpitations, irregular heart beats, high blood pressure and dizziness. This also promotes a healthy blood flow to the brain. One other component of this biochemical tissue salt is the fact that it also helps deal with anxiety and emotional tension often associated with heart conditions.
- *Calcium fluoride* (C6) (Calc. flour.) offers great toning properties and improves the strength, flexibility and elasticity of all your dog's body tissues – including veins and arteries.

### **What you can do at home**

There's actually quite a few things that you can do at home to help your pet. Reduce the stress your pet is exposed to daily. Make sure he gets moderate, but regular exercise. This will reduce his weight (if he is over weight) and make an enormous difference to his circulation.

Ensure your dog is eating a very nutritional, balanced and high quality diet with plenty of raw and unprocessed foods. It would be helpful if the food was organic, but you work with what you can find providing it offers the quality you need.

Make sure you do not have excess salt in your dog's diet. That means be careful what kinds of treats you give him such as rawhide, as the first ingredient in treats like that is usually salt. You'd be best to make your own homemade treats.

Keep your dog away from toxins and chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, insecticides and second hand cigarette smoke.

Try not to over immunize your dog. Talk to your Vet about this. It may stress the immune system unnecessarily.

Offer them ONLY filtered or bottled water.

## **HIP PROBLEMS**

### **Signs**

Some of the warning signs of your dog having hip problems are overall stiffness especially when getting up from a rest. You may hear your dog whimper when he rises, and he may have trouble climbing stairs or getting in and out of your vehicle.

Your dog may be really reluctant to exercise too much and display some lameness. And you will notice some rather unusual or funny movements – meaning unusual or funny for your dog in that they don't normally do that. Their walk may be disjointed or wobbly and they may also have swelling and tender spots in the spine and/or limbs.

They may cringe or shy away from you stroking along their back and have thickened joints on the affected limb(s). You may also notice they favor one leg over the other and they may also be grumpy because they are in pain. They may also quit eating and their drinking will be reduced.

### **Causes**

Hip problems otherwise called canine hip dysplasia is caused by the presence of many genes. This is a genetic disease and while no environmental causes have been found,



research has shown that there are many environmental factors that contribute to it showing up in a particular dog.

### **Conventional Treatment**

In a great many cases restricting exercise and a pain reliever of some sort is all that is needed to help your dog stay comfortable. But there are other options for more severely affected dogs such as aspirin if your dog can tolerate it, bute (Phenylbutazone) or Adequan therapy.

Adequan isn't approved for use in the US in dogs, but there are some vets that have seen good results with it and have tried it on older dogs. Adequan is a polysulfated glycosaminoglycan that supposedly stimulates increased production of joint fluids allowing the joints to move more freely and with less pain. Problem is it does not always work.

Gycoflex, Cosequin similar in action to Adequan.

Rimadyl -- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug currently embroiled in controversy over its side effects on the liver.

EtoGesic is also a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug and appears to avoid the liver problems sometimes associated with Rimadyl.

Novo-Meloxicam – similar in action to Rimadyl without the liver problems.

There is also surgical intervention in the form of a triple pelvic osteotomy, a femoral head ostectomy, an uncemented hip prosthesis, a BOP shelf arthroplasty and a total hip replacement.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's hip problems**

- Harpagophytum procumbens (Devil's Claw) is used worldwide for osteo-arthritis, fibrositis, rheumatism, small joint disease and lower backache thanks to its powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Research has shown consistent use of Devil's Claw for at least 6 weeks significantly improves the movement of arthritic joints and reduce swelling
- Arthrospira platenis (Spirulina) is high in concentrations of protein, vitamins and carotenoids (due to the chlorophyll it contains), and relieves arthritis, enhances liver function and boosts the immune system.
- Calcium Fluoride (6cH) (Calc. Flour.) restores tone and elasticity to muscles and tendons and improves ease of movement in the body.
- Natrium Phosphoricum (6cH) (Nat. Phos.) is a biochemical antacid, acid neutralizer and Ph balancer. It helps to control acidity in the system thus helping

to treat inflammatory conditions like arthritis, rheumatism and joint stiffness. Regular use will help improve mobility and reduce pain.

- Sodium Sulphate (6cH) (Nat. Sulph.) is a cell cleanser helping to regulate and balance all body fluids. It is also particularly useful in all bone related complaints, helping to ease pain and stiffness associated with old injuries.
- Lecithin a fatty substance found in different foods including liver, eggs and wheat germ essential for many body functions, such as helping to build strong and healthy cell membranes and maintain optimum liver functioning.
- Glucosamine Sulphate helps build and maintain healthy cartilage, which provides cushioning at the end of the bones and between joints. This nutritional substance has been approved for the treatment of arthritis in more than 70 countries. Regular use has been shown to ease pain and inflammation, increase mobility and assist in the repair of aging and damaged joints and the treatment of age-related degenerative joint disease.

### **What you can do at home**

Here are some of the things you can do at home to help your pet deal with hip problems. Keep him at his ideal weight or even just a shade lighter than that. This will help prevent stress and strain on his joints. You will want to ensure your dog has a high quality diet with both calcium and protein in adequate amounts to meet his needs.

Keeping your dog fit and active plays a big part in his health and welfare, so make sure he gets enough exercise. This will also keep his weight at a good level. And speaking of eating, if your dog does not eat all of his food, remove it. Periods of fasting for your dog throughout the day are important for good digestion and detoxification. Do NOT feed your dog chocolate under any circumstances unless it is specifically made for dogs (and its carob not real chocolate). And, if you are cooking his food for him for his diet, then use stainless steel pans, not aluminum or copper pans.

## **HOT SPOTS/PYOTRAUMATIC DERMATITIS**

### **Signs**

Hot spots are usually single, intensely itchy lesions (which may cover a large area) resulting from self-inflicted trauma to the skin, or may have taken place under a leather collar that did not dry out properly and bacteria grew under the collar causing the dog to itch and scratch – causing a lesion. Your dog tries to stop the itch by licking, chewing, or scratching which leads to trauma and further inflammation to the skin.

## **Causes**

Most of hot spots result for an allergic conditions associated with flea allergies, environmental allergies, a food allergy, parasites (mange), anal gland problems, clipping and grooming (which can cause localized inflammation of the skin), or skin infection. Yeast infections, drug reactions, and autoimmune disorders are less commonly the cause of hot spots.

## **Conventional Treatment**

All the fur covering and surrounding the lesion needs to be clipped or shaved. In some cases sedation or a topical anesthetic is required because of the sensitivity and pain. The lesion is washed with an antimicrobial shampoo containing either benzoyl peroxide or benzalkonium chloride.

Many dogs need to wear an Elizabethan collar, to prevent incessant chewing, licking or scratching that will produce further trauma.

Other conventional methods to help resolve hot spots involve astringents, anti-itch agents, anesthetic/desensitizing agents, antihistamines, glucocorticoids, a combination glucocorticoids and antibiotics, and/or antibiotics against *Staphylococcus intermedius*.

## **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's hot spot problems**

There are many medicines in homeopathy that are used for this condition. ars-alb, bovista, dulcamara, graphites, lycopodium, mezereum, peteroleum, rhus-tox, sulphur, cicuta, witch hazel, calendula, aloe vera etc are some commonly used medicines. But which medicine will work in a particular case can only be judged by a trained homeopath.

## **What you can do at home**

Perhaps you may not have horses, but this is a tip that will stand you in good stead even when working with dogs. If you have a horse with a wound that is wet, rule of thumb is dry it. If the wound is dry, rule of thumb is wet it. It actually works, so in this instance, you would want to dry out the moistness of this disease. Many of the herbal remedies will help to dry the hot spot out.

Take a long hard look at the diet you are feeding your dog. Make it is a very nutritional, balanced and high quality diet with plenty of raw and unprocessed foods.

Keep your dog as dry as you can. If he is an outdoor dog, make sure he has adequate dry shelter and if he is wearing a leather collar, then if it gets wet, remove it and dry it or change collars

Keep your dog away from toxins and chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, insecticides and second hand cigarette smoke.

## **HYPERTHYROID**

### **Signs**

The most common signs of hyperthyroidism are elevated heart rate, weight loss, increased appetite, nervousness, increased water intake and urination, and increased activity. Less commonly seen are decreased appetite, decreased activity, weakness and labored breathing.

### **Causes**

Hyperthyroidism is due to an excess amount of free thyroid hormone. There is a generalized increase in metabolic rate, with an increase in oxygen use. Most often hyperthyroidism is due to a thyroid enlargement called functional thyroid edematous hyperplasia. **Hyperthyroidism is rare in dogs.** Canine hyperthyroidism is most often caused by thyroid carcinoma.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Hyperthyroidism is treated medically with a drug called Tapazol that inhibits the production of thyroid hormone. There are numerous side effects, including anorexia, vomiting and lethargy. Surgical removal of one or both thyroid glands is an option, which has fewer complications, although it is often necessary to normalize thyroid hormone levels medically prior to surgery.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's hyperthyroid problems**

Since hypothyroidism is rare in dogs, the general approach most holistic vets tend to take is to strengthen the immune system and build up the body in general.

Bugleweed seems to be effective for mild hyperthyroidism. This must be used with extreme caution as it can cause the enlargement of the thyroid. In addition sudden discontinuation of bugleweed can cause increased symptoms of the disease. Bugleweed is NOT to be given with thyroid preparations (drugs).

### **What you can do at home**

Make sure your dog is getting a really high quality balanced diet that meets his nutritional needs, as this is one of the most important things you can do for him. Keep him away from toxins and chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, and second hand smoke.

If your dog happens to be on any other medications, take all of them into the Vet and ask precisely what all the side effects are for the meds. If you are not comfortable with the side effects or if there is a potential of liver damage for your dog, then ask for an alternative medication. If there is not an alternative, then ask what you can do to minimize the effects of liver damage.

Massage therapy is good for your dog and allows him to relax and enjoy the time bonding with you. Acupressure is also beneficial for him as well.

If your dog does not eat all his food, then take it up after about 20 minutes. He needs to have fasting time throughout the day to aid his digestion.

## **HYPOTHYROID**

### **Signs**

If your dog gains weight without any change in diet, he may have a hypothyroid condition. He may also become lethargic and seem to lack energy. The coat and skin may suffer from the lack of thyroid hormones, which may cause hair loss and dry skin. Constipation, slow heart rate and infertility are also common problems in pets with hypothyroidism.

### **Causes**

Hypothyroidism is almost always caused (up to 95 percent of the time) by one of two diseases, lymphocytic thyroiditis or idiopathic thyroid gland atrophy. Lymphocytic thyroiditis means the immune system decides the thyroid is abnormal/foreign and attacks it. Idiopathic thyroid gland atrophy is also poorly understood. Normal thyroid tissue is replaced by fat tissue in what is considered a degenerative disease.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Administration of a daily dose of synthetic thyroid hormones. This can often restore healthy thyroid functioning very effectively.

One problem with synthetic thyroid hormones is that may result in too much thyroid hormone, causing hyperthyroidism. It is difficult to determine exactly how much of the synthetic hormones are needed for optimal thyroid functioning.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's hyperthyroid problems**

- Fucus vesiculosus is also called Bladderwrack or kelp and is an excellent source of iodine, which is crucial in preventing thyroid problems. Kelp is also used as a metabolic stimulant and will help overweight pets to shed their excess weight. Do not buy kelp harvested from beaches or near coasts due to possible contamination.
- Astragalus membranaceus (Huang Qi) is a noted protector of thyroid and adrenal gland functions. It also regulates blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and helps fight diseases.
- Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian Ginseng) is outstanding for dealing with the fatigue many pets face with hypothyroid conditions.

- Urtica urens is another traditional herb used as a circulatory stimulant to regulate metabolism, thyroid and adrenal function. It's also a good source of minerals, and Vitamins A, B and C.

### **What you can do at home**

Make sure your dog is getting a really high quality balanced diet that meets his nutritional needs, as this is one of the most important things you can do for him. Keep him away from toxins and chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, and second hand smoke.

If your dog happens to be on any other medications, take all of them into the Vet and ask precisely what all the side effects are for the meds. If you are not comfortable with the side effects or if there is a potential of liver damage for your dog, then ask for an alternative medication. If there is not an alternative, then ask what you can do to minimize the effects of liver damage.

Massage therapy is good for your dog and allows him to relax and enjoy the time bonding with you. Acupressure is also beneficial for him as well.

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# 11

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY

### L – O

#### LICE

##### **Signs**

Your dog may have lice if you see heavy, intense scratching, and irritation. This will often end up with raw bald patches. The lice are usually found around the ears, neck, shoulders, and anus. Although dog lice are relatively large, it's likely you will see their eggs in your dog's hair. Lice eggs otherwise called nits are easier to see, because they're attached to the dog's hair and look like white tiny flakes of dust.

##### **Causes**

There are two types of lice: biting and sucking. Sucking lice feed off blood and can be a serious health concern if the dog is heavily infested. The sucking lice can cause a heavy blood loss (unless caught and treated) leading to anemia. The more common biting lice, *Trichodectes Canis*, are more of a nuisance than a serious health concern. However having said that, they are very contagious and any dog that comes into contact with your dog will contract lice as well.

##### **Conventional Treatment**

Dog lice have no resistance to insecticides and thus this is the conventional treatment – insecticide for your dog – usually pyrethrins. Your vet will likely recommend an insecticide spray or bath to kill them. He may require you to cut off matted hair and wash your dog about once every week with the insecticide. If your dog is already on a form of flea treatment, it may not be designed to kill lice until after the flea reproductive cycle, so treatments such as Advantage, Revolution or Frontline may be recommended. BEWARE! Some dogs will go into anaphalatic shock when exposed to pyrethrins. The breathing passages swell shut, the tongue swells etc. This IS A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY. Call your Vet immediately.

This procedure is then repeated until the itching is gone and there are no more visible lice eggs. If you have a puppy that is infected with lice, consult your vet first before starting on any kind of pesticide treatment or other type of medication.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's lice problems**

- The Melaleuca alternifolia, or tea tree, belongs to the same family of plants as the eucalyptus tree. It contains the major component l-terpinen-4-ol, which research shows has a high solvent action that attacks mature lice and dislodges them from the scalp. The result is a high lice mortality rate after the first application.
- For lice treatment simply mix approximately 30 drops of 100 percent pure tea tree oil to the regular recommended amount of tea tree shampoo for your dog.

### **What you can do at home**

To prevent further lice infestation and make sure that all the lice eggs have been completely eliminated, throw away all bedding that your dog has lain on during lice infestation and to disinfect the area where he sleeps. Keep his bedding clean and dry at all times and change it frequently to prevent a reoccurrence.

Make sure your dog is getting a really high quality balanced diet that meets his nutritional needs, as this is one of the most important things you can do for him. Keep him away from toxins and chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, and second hand smoke. A weakened immune system is very attractive to lice.

## **LIVER PROBLEMS**

### **Signs**

These are some of the signs to look for if you suspect liver problems in your dog. Loss of appetite, weight loss, listlessness/lethargy, poor coat condition, vomiting, diarrhea or soft stools, gray stools, swollen abdomen, fluid retention, increased thirst, yellow mucuous membranes, weakness, confusion, and if in the advanced stages, convulsions or delirium.

### **Causes**

There are many causes of liver disease – genetics, portal shunts, copper storage diseases, drug induced diseases, poisons, pancreatitis, Cushing's disease, malnutrition, parasites, environmental stresses, cancer, trauma, and infectious diseases (bacterial, viral, fungal).

### **Conventional Treatment**

How the liver problems are treated depends on the cause of the initial damage to the liver. The pet that has liver disease as a result of trauma may require only



hospitalization, good nursing care and proper dietary management to recover. If infection is the cause of liver disease, supportive therapy may have to include antibiotics.

Liver disease causes damage to the individual liver cells. As more and more of the individual cells are damaged, the entire organs ability to function properly is decreased and can result in liver failure. The liver has a big reserve capacity and, unlike some of the other organs in the body, has the ability to regenerate. Therefore, if we eliminate the harmful agent and institute proper dietary therapy, chances are good for recovery.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's liver problems**

- *Carduus marianus* (Milk thistle) is a well known and very important liver tonic and restorative that has actually been used for over 2,000 years. Scientific analysis of Milk Thistle shows that it contains a flavonoid complex called silymarin which is a powerful anti-oxidant and can block the entrance of toxins into the liver and remove toxins at cellular level – regenerating liver cells and improving liver function.
- *Arctium lappa* (Burdock) a blood purifier and system cleanser. Has antibiotic and anti-rheumatic properties. Very good for digestive sluggishness, especially after following an overly rich and unhealthy diet.
- *Chelidonium majus* (Greater Celandine) for indigestion, jaundice and sluggish livers. Clinical trials have shown it stimulates the production of bile and pancreatic digestive enzymes, relieves gallbladder spasms and stimulates underactive gallbladders. Also has anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer and antimicrobial properties.
- *Kalium Muriaticum* (C6) (Kali. Mur.) essential for treating a sluggish liver, a cleanser and purifier. Good for heartburn and belching for pets.
- *Natrium Phosphate* (C6) (Nat. Phos.) if used on a regular basis it can help assimilate fats and promote the flow of bile. Treats indigestion and assists with healthy digestive functions.
- *Natrium Sulphate* (C6) (Nat. Sulph.) helps to detoxify the liver, ensure a healthy supply of bile and promote the health of the pancreas. Good for the diabetic dog.

### **What you can do at home**

Keep your pet away from toxins and chemicals.

Massage therapy can help to stimulate the immune system as can acupuncture.

Diet, diet, diet, the most important consideration. Make sure your dog is getting a high quality, balanced diet that meets his specific needs. The liver gets rid of toxins in the

body so the less chemical additives and preservatives in your dog's diet, the better. It reduces the liver's workload.

Offer your dog bottled or filtered water. It is usually considered to be more pure than water from the tap, and since you are trying to offer foods to help your dog heal, pure water is another way you can help him.

Don't feed your pet or offer water in plastic bowls. Use glass, stainless steel or porcelain.

Make sure your dog gets lots of exercise on a regular basis. This stimulates the healing powers as well.

## **LUMPS/LIPOMAS OR SEBACEOUS CYSTS**

### **Signs**

The word "lipo" stems from the Greek word lipos, which means fat or fatty tissue. A lipoma is a fatty-cell tumor. Lipomas are contained in a thin capsule of tissue, and have a relatively limited blood supply and are have a lumpy form to them.

These tumors are commonly found on older dogs, but young dogs and even puppies can develop them. They appear on the surface of dogs, and can be single or multiple. They are slow growing tumors that are usually benign. Malignant forms of the tumor are very rare.

Lipomas usually grow slowly and the cells are well-formed, and recognizable. It is easy to see the cells are fat cells when they are viewed under a microscope. When the cells are not well-differentiated the tumor is more likely to metastasize. The skin covering the lipoma is usually smooth.

You will find them on your dog's body likely when petting or grooming him.

Lumps that ooze cheesy like material are likely sebaceous cysts.

### **Causes**

Your dog getting older and his immune system slowing down is generally the cause of lipomas. Skin glands blocking up are the cause of sebaceous cysts.

### **Conventional Treatment**

The most often taken route of treating lipomas is to leave them alone and monitor them. They can be surgically removed if they become a problem and hinder your dog's movement. The most important thing is to keep track of their size and report this to your Vet.

For sebaceous cysts, a skin scraping may be taken to check for any other difficulties. But application of a warm cloth directly to the cyst on a daily basis will help the cyst reduce in size. If the cyst ruptures, it needs to be kept clean and will need to be washed with an antiseptic solution such as Hibitane or Betadine.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's lipoma problems**

Vitamin E and essential fatty acids will do wonders for boosting your dog's immune system, as will echinacea, green tea, essiac tea, garlic (but not in high doses), and ginseng.

### **What you can do at home**

One of the most crucial things you can do for your dog is to ensure he is getting a quality diet of foods that suit his nutritional requirements. This is so important you may want to check into feeding raw (organic).

Keep your dog properly groomed and his coat in good shape. This will help if he has had sebaceous cysts.

## **MANGE/DEMODECTIC/SARCOPTIC**

### **Signs**

**Demodectic** mites of various species live on the bodies of virtually every adult dog and most human beings, without causing any harm or irritation. These small (0.25 mm) live inside of the hair follicles. In humans, the mites usually are found in the skin, eyelids, and the creases of the nose.

Demodectic mange usually involves hair loss, crusty, red skin and at times, a greasy or moist appearance. Hair loss is one of the first signs, usually around the muzzle, eyes, and other areas on the head.

In localized mange, a few circular crusty areas will be noted, most frequently around the muzzle. If the whole body is involved (generalized mange), there will be areas of hair loss over the entire coat, including the head, neck, abdomen, legs, and feet. The skin along the head, side, and back will be crusty and oftentimes inflamed. It will often crack and ooze a clear fluid. Hair will be scant, but the skin itself will often be oily to the touch. Some animals can become quite ill and develop a fever, lose their appetite, and become lethargic.

**Sarcoptic Mange** - The symptoms are varied but usually include hair loss and severe itching on the elbows, ears, armpits, hocks, chest, and ventral abdomen. The mites live on areas of the skin that have less hair. As the infection worsens it can spread over the entire body.

Small red pustules develop with a yellow crust on the skin. Because of the severe itching and scratching from the dog, the skin is traumatized and a variety of sores and infections can develop. The itching seems to be much worse in warm conditions such as indoors or near a stove or heat vent. If the infection goes on untreated or is mistakenly treated as an allergy, the skin may darken due to the constant irritation, and the surrounding lymph nodes may become enlarged.

### **Causes**

**Demodectic mange** (also known as red mange, follicular mange, or puppy mange) is a skin disease, generally of young dogs, caused by the mite, *Demodex canis*.

**Sarcoptic mange**, or canine scabies is caused by the parasite *Sarcoptes scabiei*.

### **Conventional Treatment**

**Demodectic** mange is usually treated with lotions, dips, and shampoos. Ninety percent of these cases are localized and can often be treated topically. Treatment involves 1% rotenone or, a 5% benzoyl peroxide gel applied daily.

Bathing periodically with a benzoyl peroxide shampoo and feeding a high quality diet and a multivitamin with a fatty acid may also help some dogs. Most of these localized lesions will heal on their own and do not require overly aggressive treatment.

Generalized demodicosis requires aggressive treatment usually with Amitraz dips applied every two weeks. Amitraz an organophosphate, and is generally available under the product name Mitaban. Wear rubber gloves when applying it to the dog, and it should be applied in an area with adequate ventilation. Longhair dogs need to be clipped short. Before dipping, the dog should be bathed with a benzoyl peroxide. Most dogs with generalized demodicosis require between 4 and 14 dips. Some dogs develop sedation or nausea when dipped, and toy breeds in particular are sensitive to Amitraz. Half strength dips should be used on these sensitive animals.

Two other products used are Ivermectin – use with extreme care – and Milbemycin (Interceptor) – also use under Vet supervision.

### **Sarcoptic Mange**

Clip the dog if he had long hair, bathe him with a benzoyl peroxide shampoo to cleanse the skin, and then apply an organophosphate dip (Paramite). Amitraz dips and Mitaban (also organophosphates), and lime sulfur dips (Lymdip) have also been used effectively.

These dips are very unpleasant to apply for both the owner and the dog. Many mites live on the face and ears of dogs so great care must be exercised when applying these dips to these sensitive areas. The dips can be toxic to humans and are not suitable for very young, old, or debilitated animals. There are reported cases of resistance to these dips.

Selamectin can be used (Revolution), which is a topical solution is applied once a month. Liquid Ivermectin is another alternative - do NOT use in Collies or Shetland sheep dogs and should be used with caution in the herding breeds. Some veterinarians use Interceptor at an off label dose. Both Ivermectin and Interceptor should only be used under direct veterinary supervision and care.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's mange problems**

- Fasting for at least 48 hours on fresh vegetable juices & broths with added vitamin C to aid in detoxification and help strengthen the immune system. High doses of vitamin C may be needed under the guidance of a natural animal practitioner. Other nutrients, which may be beneficial, are lecithin, zinc, vitamin A, E and vitamin B complex. If your pet has been on antibiotics, it is a good idea to supplement with acidophilus.
- Garlic is an anti-parasitic herb and it also aids immune function and healing. So add to food daily, but don't go overboard.
- Herbs, neem oil, essential oils, cider vinegar and other natural ingredients may be used externally to help mange.
- If your pet has been on antibiotics, use an acidophilus supplement for a few weeks afterwards.
- A lemon-garlic rinse can be made up. Chop up around 30 to 40 cloves of garlic (skin and all) and place into a large pot with 6 or more lemon skins and one whole lemon, chopped. Fill pot with about four liters of water and bring to the boil, simmer just until peel is mushy. Remove from heat, cover and allow to cool. Apply cooled solution liberally to all affected areas and leave to dry. Use daily for up to ten days.
- Sulphur is one of the most commonly used remedies in ascending potencies. Other remedies include Psorinum, Arsenicum alb for severe itching. Tellurium and Mezereum may be indicated when pustular lesions are found on the head and face with small scabs.
- Flower essences to choose from are Crab apple, cherry plum, Gorse, Mimulus or Aspen depending on the particular dog and its personality.

### **What you can do at home**

Treat your dog internally as well as externally and a natural raw food diet is the best defense for building a healthy immune system.

Vitamin E and essential fatty acids will also help with your dog's diet as will Echinacea, ginseng, and astragalus. Consult with a holistic Vet for doses for your particular dog.

All processed (dried, canned and packaged) foods should be avoided, and all milk products also.

## **OVERWEIGHT DOG**

### **Signs**

The most evident one will be that your dog is fat. Period. This will mean they may also be sluggish, have trouble breathing, pant hard after exercising, have joint and hip problems, gastrointestinal problems, liver and pancreas problems etc.

### **Causes**

Too much food, not enough exercise, genetic predisposition, an incorrect diet, diet too high in fat and not enough protein, and a variety of diseases e.g. hypothyroidism

### **Conventional Treatment**

Put the dog on a diet, make sure they get exercise, stop high calorie treats, and do not have your dog on free feed.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's over weight problems**

- Fucus vesiculosus a rich source of minerals, including iodine, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron. Iodine helps the thyroid function properly.
- Curcuma longa, used by Indian healers more than 3,000 years ago to treat obesity, this has a beneficial effect on the liver, stimulating the bile flow that breaks down dietary fat.
- Sylibum marianus (Milk Thistle) contains silymarin that blocks toxins trying to enter the liver and assists in the regeneration of the liver. It is effective in a weight loss program and has a direct effect on the whole body.
- Taraxacum officinalis Dandelion effective for digestion and rich in Vitamin A, D, C, various B Vitamins, iron, lecithin, silicon, potassium, magnesium, zinc and manganese.

### **What you can do at home**

The best diet for dogs is a raw diet. Try to stay away from cooked food, pasteurized milk and other processed. Consult with your Vet as this is an area where there is a great deal of controversy over cooked versus uncooked foods.

Don't change a diet suddenly, instead slowly introduce fresh, raw and unprocessed food into your dog's daily diet while reducing commercial foods that have little nutritional value. Always read the labels of the pet food you are feeding.

Keep the diet varied, but watch out for anything that may cause an allergy reaction in your dog.

# 12

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY

### P-T

#### PANCREATITIS

##### Signs

Pancreatitis has been known to occur suddenly in dogs and your dog will show some or all of the following signs: lack of appetite, frequent vomiting and diarrhea (may contain blood). Your dog may drink more water than usual and vomit soon after drinking.

You may see weakness, inability to walk and abdominal tenderness or pain may be present. Body temperature varies with pancreatitis, but usually the temperature is higher than normal at the onset of the disease and then falls to below normal as the condition continues.

The eyes may become sunken, and the mouth and eyes may become very dry, indicating dehydration. Unfortunately, these signs are by no means unique to pancreatitis so your veterinarian may recommend tests to differentiate pancreatitis from other diseases.

##### Causes

There doesn't seem to be a precise cause for this disease, but there are however several contributing factors.

Hyperlipidemia means the amount of fat in the blood is elevated. This happens for a short period after a meal, and then returns to the right level. Some dogs have a metabolic problem that prevents the proper clearing of the fat from the blood, especially after a meal high in fat such as especially fatty table scraps. Dietary fat intake and the nutrition your dog gets are important factors in this disease.

Obesity/Overweight dogs seem to be more prone to pancreatitis.

Infectious diseases (bacterial/viral) can contribute to the development of pancreatitis. Bacterial infections can arise as the result of eating spoiled or contaminated food or water. Viral infections usually result from contact with other infected animals.

Trauma is another factor, especially any trauma to the abdomen. E.g. pets injured in car crashes commonly develop pancreatitis.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Food and water and all medications are withheld to reduce the need for the pancreas to work. Dehydration is addressed either by IV or under the skin. In some cases food is held for two to five days to stop the release of digestive enzymes from the extremely sensitive pancreas.

Solid foods will be introduced gradually and your dog will be fed small amounts of highly digestible nutrients and a low level of fat. Gradually the quantity may be increased until an eventual return to your dog's normal diet.

Be aware that once your dog has had a bout of pancreatitis, he is at a greater risk to develop it again if he is not fed a proper diet. You will need to avoid high fat diets, fatty meals, treats like table scraps, meat trimmings or fat supplements.

There may be a drug prescribed in addition to the diet. They may include something to relieve the severe abdominal pain, antibiotics to prevent or treat pancreatic infections or abscesses, and/or drugs to decrease pancreatic secretions.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's pancreatitis problems**

Chamomile, Oats, Dandelion, Fennel, Comfrey and Alfalfa, the Bach Flower Remedies Walnut, Scleranthus, Olive and Rescue Remedy.

Also chromium is known to stabilize blood sugar levels, calcium and magnesium are helpful for treating glandular disorders, vitamin B complex, choline, inositol, lecithin (these three are involved in fat digestion), milk thistle extract (a natural blood and liver cleaner), dandelion (helps bile production), olive leaf extract (helps with inflammation) and garlic (anti-oxidant).

### **What you can do at home**

As we have already mentioned, diet is the most crucial thing you will need to improve for your dog. Cut back on fats, and feed a high quality suitable food that meets his needs. Consult with your Vet about this as it is difficult to weed through all the commercial dog foods on the market and feel like you know what you are doing.

Feed more frequently throughout the day to help with his digestion. Three times would be good to start with. And feed smaller amounts as well.

Use glass, stainless steel or porcelain feeding dishes.

Don't leave the food down if it is not all eaten. Remove it after about 20 minutes and offer it again at the next feeding.

Keep your dog exercised, as there is nothing better for stress than the well-being of good exercise daily.

Talk to the Vet about digestive enzymes and whether or not this would help your dog.



Make sure your dog is his optimum weight and not obese. To get the weight off, you will have to start slowly.

Consider making your own treats for your dog from healthy ingredients.

## **RINGWORM**

### **Signs**

Ringworm may cause various lesions on the skin and not always in the shape of a ring. You may notice your pet scratching at areas that look scaly and inflamed and, with time, the hair in these patches may be lost. The skin lesion often has scaly skin in the center. Small pustules may be present, and it may be irritated and itchy. The lesions are most common on the head but can also occur on the legs, feet, or tail.

Ringworm can look very similar to a number of other skin conditions including mange and allergic conditions, so if in doubt it is important to take your pet to a vet in order to be sure of the diagnosis.

### **Causes**

Ringworm is a contagious skin condition and is actually caused by a fungus.

There are 3 specific fungi for this disease in dogs. The first is *microsporum canis*, the second *microsporum gypseum* and the third is *trichophyton mentagrophytes*. In dogs the majority of cases are caused by *Microsporum canis*.

The ringworm fungus is most prevalent in hot, humid climates, but most cases occur in the fall and winter. It is most commonly found either on or in the living quarters of infected animals. Spores can be shed and live for over 18 months. The incidence of ringworm infections in dogs is quite small.

### **Conventional Treatment**

Most small, isolated lesions on healthy dogs and puppies will heal on their own within 4 months.

For isolated lesions, the area around the lesion should be clipped down to the skin. Do not to irritate the skin, as this may spread the infection. The lesions can be treated topically twice a day with an antifungal medication. Popular treatments include miconazole cream, Lotrimin cream, or 1% chlorhexidine ointment.

For more severe or more generalized lesions, in addition to clipping and topical treatment, antifungal shampoos or dips can be used. A 0.5% chlorhexidine shampoo, 2% miconazole shampoo, ketoconazole shampoo, lime sulfur dips, or 2% chlorhexidine solution that are applied every 2 to 4 days.

In severe cases, another treatment is to use oral antifungal agents. Griseofulvin was the first choice, but more recently it has been ketoconazole and itraconazole. These products all have to be given for several months, but because of their potential toxicity, must only be used under close direct veterinary supervision. Griseofulvin should not be used in breeding or pregnant animals.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's ringworm problems**

- Melaleuca alternifolia, or Tea Tree Oil is used externally for inflammation. It has excellent anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and healing properties and a high safety profile.
- Azadirachta indica (Neem) an anti-inflammatory with antifungal properties that helps to expel parasites, bacterial and fungal infections. Interestingly, this tree is prized for making furniture because the wood is worm resistant. That is why this is a highly cherished Ayurvedic medicine.
- Calendula officinalis (Marigold) treats skin problems and promotes wound healing. Has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal properties and helps regenerate damaged skin tissue.
- Hamamelis virginianum (Witchhazel) terrific for reducing inflammation, bleeding and pain. Treats and prevents skin infections.

### **What you can do at home**

Again, you need to be feeding a good healthy diet to optimize your dog's immune system.

Toss his bedding regularly and wash it hot soapy water with bleach.

Check his coat frequently to ensure there are no lesions. If there are and you are not sure what they are, contact your Vet for a correct diagnosis. No sense giving your dog something he may not need for something he does not have.

You may wish to see if the infection will resolve itself as it sometimes does, but if it does show signs of getting worse, then you need to contact your Vet.

Keep your dog away from other dogs or cats you suspect may be carrying ringworm.

Yes, you can get ringworm from your dog, so if you develop a small itchy ring like patch of skin on your body, see your doctor for the treatment of choice.

## **POOP EATING/COPHRAGIA**

### **Signs**

Well there's no way in the world you will miss the signs of this – you'll either see your dog eat his own feces, or the feces of other animals. If you don't see it, you will either smell it on his breath or experience it when he tries to give you kisses.

There are different kinds of coprophagia.

Autocoprophagis is when an animal eats its own poop.

Intraspecific is when it eats feces from another dog.

Interspecific is when it eats poo from another species.

If the problem is behavioral there is little in the form of diet or any supplement that will help.

### **Causes**

To this day there have not been a lot of really solid reasons offered why a dog eats poop. Not reasons that make any particular sense that is. Some suggest it is because he is bored, is missing nutrients, is stressed, or he eats it because he can.

Other reasons include bitches with a new litter of puppies may eat puppy droppings to keep the area clean. Puppies may see their mother doing this and copy the behavior.

If a puppy is punished for pooping in the house, he might be eating the evidence.

Overfeeding may cause your pup to eat his feces because he hasn't digested all the food properly. Therefore his feces smells and possibly tastes the same as his dinner.

Another school of thought is that it may also be caused by medical problems like exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, pancreatitis, intestinal infections, malabsorptive syndromes and over-feeding high fat content diets.

### **Conventional Treatment**

This may be one of the only time's you will find what you are trying to do to stop your dog from eating poop is the same thing that the Vet recommends. (see what you can do at home)

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's poop eating problems**

- Calcarea Fluorica (Calcium Fluoride)
- Calcarea Phosphorica (Calcium Phosphorus)
- Calcarea Sulphuricum (Calcium Sulphur)

- Ferrum Phosphoricum (Ferrum Phos-iron)
- Kali Muriaticum (Kali Mur-potassium)
- Kali Phosphorica (Kali Phos-potassium)
- Kali Sulphuricum (Kali Sulphur-potassium)
- Magnesia Phosphorica (Magnesium Phosphorus)
- Natrum Muriaticum (Natrum Mur-sodium chloride-remember this is the mineral)
- Natrum Phosphoricum (Natrum Phosphorus)
- Natrum Sulphuricum (Natrum Sulphur)
- Silicea (Silica)

### **What you can do at home**

Get your dogs wormed regularly, having their vaccinations up to date, and feed them a well balanced- nutritious meal.

Try feeding twice a day - keep it to the same total amount though.

Keep the dogs living area clean of poop.

Teach your dog the OFF training command. This is a basic obedience command, which your dog should respect if you have established yourself as the alpha dog.

Add a little Pineapple, Pumpkin, or Spinach to your dog's meal. Apparently these things taste horrible in the poop. Try a repellent substance like hot pepper or Tabasco sauce directly onto the feces to make it unpleasant to eat.

Use a pet product specially designed for this common problem such as Forbid – problem is, it only works with some dogs.

Use the negative association training method though the use of a choke collar. BUT MAKE SURE YOU USE IT CORRECTLY!!!! When your dog goes to eat feces say No! and immediately give the lead a sharp tug and will establish that eating poop is not a pleasant experience. Be consistent using this method, and it must be applied every time not just some of the time.

One last bit of good news is that most dogs eventually grow out of this habit. Then there are those that do not no matter what you do.

## **SENILITY/CANINE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION**

### **Signs**

There are four main areas where symptoms appear. They are disorientation, interaction with people, activity level and sleep, and housetraining.

Disorientation may present itself with an animal that wanders aimlessly, gets stuck in

corners, stands at the wrong side of a door or appears not to recognize people or familiar commands and words.

Changes in interaction with people may include seeking more or less attention than normal, not wanting to be petted, not responding to his or her name.

Activity and sleep changes show in such behaviors as sleeping more during the day and less at night; barking for no reason; forgetting meal times; and wandering aimlessly.

Housetraining changes are obvious - urinating in the house, not asking to go outside or forgetting why they are there when they do go out. This is not the same as incontinence, which is usually a physical problem.

### **Causes**

Studies have shown that dogs affected by this syndrome show deposition of amyloid (a protein) in their brains in patterns very similar to the amyloid plaques found in the brains of human Alzheimer's patients.

Cognitive dysfunction is often associated with the depletion of dopamine, a neurotransmitter.

This is usually associated with aging in dogs.

### **Conventional Treatment**

L-Deprenyl helps prolong dopamine activity. Dopamine breakdown results free radicals, and L-Deprenyl helps reduce amounts of free radicals in the brain. Often dogs improved during the first three months and it appears that the earlier L-Deprenyl is started, the better the result.

If no improvement is seen after the first month, your veterinarian may double the dose for an additional month before deciding the drug may not be useful in that particular pet.

Some therapeutic diets contain antioxidants (mixed tocopherols, vitamin C, beta-carotene, carotenoids, and flavonoids), mitochondrial cofactors, and omega-3 fatty acids (EPA, DHA). These diets have been shown to improve the performance of a number of cognitive tasks.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's senility problems**

Natural therapies might also be used in the senior pet for calming, reducing anxiety or inducing sleep including melatonin (to help with sleeping), valerian, Bach's flower remedies, the pheromones, Ginkgo Biloba (to improve cognitive function) and Neuro-PS (Phosphatidylserine), Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

### **What you can do at home**

Use their intelligence to improve the quality of their lives. If your old dog's vision is still good, teach signals. This will serve as a back-up if hearing fails, which it often does. Signals are fun for dogs and are a more natural language for them than words.

Grooming (touch) will help your dog cope with vision and hearing loss. Your touch will help guide your dog.

Environmental enrichment like living with another dog, playing daily with toys and a leisurely walk some place with exciting smells and sounds, provides the greatest improvement in learning ability.

Take more frequent potty breaks.

Stick to a routine and don't re-arrange the furniture.

If he forgets why he is outside, remind him and praise copiously.

Switch his diet to one that is easy to digest and of a good quality to meet his senior nutritional needs.

Massage can really help a senior with Canine Cognitive Dysfunction plus it relaxes them and is a wonderful time for bonding and sharing your love with your dog.

## **TICKS**

### **Signs**

An ugly tick attached to your dog's coat with its head buried under the skin sucking blood. If your dog has long hair, you may feel lumps or bumps under your hand. Part the fur and check for ticks. Make it a daily chore to tick check your dog if you live in an area that has a high incidence of tick infestation. Seems like they live just about every place you could think of.

You may also see anorexia, weight loss, fever, lethargy, discharge from nose and/or eyes, diarrhea, neurological signs like seizures, depression, vomiting bile, nosebleeds, swelling of extremities, muscle wasting, etc.

### **Causes**

Lyme disease is an infectious tick-borne disease that mainly affects dogs caused by a type of bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Diseases that ticks can transmit to companion animals also Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis (a bacterial infection), and babesiosis (a blood disorder).

Studies suggest only about 10 percent of animals exposed will actually contract the disease and the severity of the disease appears to vary with the animal's age and the strength of their immune system.

Arthritis may develop in the short to long term and a few dogs develop severe progressive renal disease, which often leads to death.

The most common initial symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, joint swelling, lameness and lethargy

### **Conventional Treatment**

The conventional treatment of Lyme disease usually involves antibiotics for 14 to 30 days, but sometimes extended antibiotic use is recommended. Lyme disease does usually respond to appropriate antibiotics.

Antibiotics weaken the immune system which can cause further problems, especially in the long-term.

Topical insecticides that repel ticks and vaccination against Lyme disease are also often recommended. However these can lead to excess toxin build-up and cause further weakening of the immune system in the long term.

Conventional treatment for Lyme in dogs is an aggressive course of doxycycline or amoxicillin. Most vets prefer doxycycline because it will also treat several other tick borne diseases that may exist as undiagnosed co-infections.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's tick problems**

- Carduus marianus (Milk Thistle) contains Silymarin is a powerful anti-oxidant and can block the entrance of toxins into the liver and remove toxins at the cellular level, thereby resulting in regeneration of liver cells and improved liver functioning. This would have a direct impact on overall systemic health as the liver is one of the most important organs in the body and is often affected by Lyme Disease
- Crotalus hor. (C200) effective for the treatment of any illness that includes hemorrhage as well as severe septic infections especially when there is a breakdown of red blood cells leading to severe strain on the liver and possible jaundice.
- China (C6) known for its beneficial effect on fever and exhaustion, especially following illness or severe fluid loss
- Ferrum Phosphate C6 (Ferrum Phos.) used for infection or inflammation in the body.

- Aconite (C6) treats shock and anxiety. Also used to otherwise healthy pets who develop a sudden illness of acute nature that often comes with a fever, fear, and anxiety.

### **What you can do at home**

Do not use alcohol, nail polish, hot matches, petroleum jelly, or other methods to remove ticks. These methods may cause them to regurgitate their gut contents. Don't crush the tick after removal and get the contents of a potentially infected tick on your hands.

The recommended way to remove an attached tick is to wear gloves and use tweezers. Grab the body with the tweezers and pull straight back – do NOT twist or jerk. And above all else do not puncture the tick's body. If the whole thing didn't come out use an alcohol sterilized needle to pick out the mouth barbs. Clean the wound with soap, water and then alcohol. Put the tick in rubbing alcohol, it's the only thing that kills them. They can actually survive being flushed down the toilet.

Check your pets daily for ticks especially after walks in tick-infested areas e.g. long grass. Check dark, moist areas: hair, cracks behind ears, knees, elbows, underarms, crotch etc.

Ask your Vet about any medications your dog may be given for suspected or confirmed Lyme disease or other tick borne disease.

To strengthen the immune system, use acupressure massage.

Keep pets that have outside exposure off furniture especially bedding.

Make certain that you have very fine pointed tweezers available.

Minimize ticks on your property by creating tick free zones around your home by cutting back wooded areas and increasing the size of open lawn. Keep your grass mowed to 3 inches or less to lower humidity at ground level. Place play areas in the direct sunshine and remove leaf litter, brush, weeds etc. Create borders to separate your lawn from the woods.



# 13

## MANAGEMENT OF COMMON ILLNESSES/PROBLEMS NATURALLY U-W

### URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS (UTI)

#### **Signs**

UTIs often recur and can lead to more serious kidney infections if left untreated.

Symptoms include straining to urinate, painful or difficult urination (dysuria), constantly licking genitals, frequent urination without much being passed (pollakiuria), pink or red urine indicating the presence of blood (hematuria), strong or foul smelling urine, increased volume of urination (polyuria), cloudy urine, fever, urination in inappropriate places, excessive thirst (polydipsia), pus in the urine (pyuria), crystals in the urine (crystalluria), and lower back (lumbar ) pain.

#### **Causes**

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are uncomfortable and extremely painful. They tend to be more common in cats than dogs and can be caused by bacterial infection, bladder stones or urolithiasis (stones in the urinary tract).

#### **Conventional Treatment**

For the treatment of UTI's your vet will run tests to determine what the specific cause of the problem is. In a great many cases, antibiotics will be given. Although they do give your animal quick relief, they may weaken the immune system, particularly if your dog has recurring UTI's. Anti-inflammatories are also usually prescribed to relieve discomfort and decrease inflammation of the bladder.

Your vet may prescribe a specific urinary diet for your pet. This will usually be the case if there happens to be crystals in the bladder. The diets work by changing the pH of the urine to either become less or more acidic. Some, but not all crystals can be dissolved if the correct diet is found but in certain cases surgical removal of the stones and crystals may be the only option.

#### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's UTI problems**

- Arctostaphylos uva ursi is a very well known antiseptic and treatment for cystitis and all UTIs. The main active ingredient is glycoside arbutin. Hydroquinone derived from arbutin and methylarbutin is a powerful anti-bacterial agent.
- Berberis vulgaris is a widely studied herb with the main ingredient berberine which is a recognized antibacterial agent. It prevents bacterial from attaching to cell walls, reduces inflammation and strengthens immune functions. It also treats diarrhea.
- Cantharis C6 a homeopathic remedy used for severe cystitis and the burning on urination as well as the inability to pass more than a few drops at a time.
- Staphysagris C6 another proven homeopathic remedy for urogenital conditions like cystitis and well as urine retention at times associated with prostate problems.
- Vitamin B helps in fighting urinary infection and maintaining kidney health.
- Once the infection is gone (as shown in a second, clear urine culture and sensitivity), give cranberry juice capsules daily. These help to prevent new bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall. Cranberry juice capsules will NOT help if bacteria is present, so make sure your dog has a clean urine culture first.

### **What you can do at home**

Ensure your dog has access to fresh water at all times. It should be filtered or bottled, not have fluoride or chlorine in it. Also offer foods that are moist, and high in water content e.g. chicken broth, yogurt, soup and cottage cheese.

Provide easy access to a place your dog can pee when he needs to. Holding it for long periods of time can lead to chronic bladder problems.

Diet in these cases is really crucial to assist his system in healing and maintaining a healthy balance. Try to avoid dry foods and do not give your dog anything containing sugar. Try a raw diet if you are able to, or a high quality commercial food with all the needed ingredients.

Take your dog out more frequently to pee to help him with his urgency problem.

Take him on more walks to help him get more exercise and increase the frequency of urination. The more he urinates the better it is. When urine remains in the bladder for a long time, bacteria can multiply and your pet will be more prone to infection.

Try to reduce stress in his environment if possible.

## **VOMITING**

### **Signs**

Either you see your dog vomit up his food or bile or water, or you may not see it, but find or step in it later.

### **Causes**

The list of causes for your dog vomiting is over two pages long, so we will just give you a range of reasons.

The most common cause overall though is garbage gut – eating anything that isn't nailed down, and in some cases, eating around the things that are nailed down. Dogs have been known to eat wallpaper, shoes, toilet paper, razors, sticks, stones, dead birds and other dead animals, socks (whole or in part), laundry soap, chocolate. You name it, a dog has likely eaten it. This will in 9 out of 10 cases cause your dog to throw up.

Other causes can range from stomach cancer to ulcers and from toxic substances to pancreatitis. By the way, there is a difference between vomiting and regurgitation. Vomiting is an active process. Your dog is apprehensive and heaves and retches to vomit. If food is present in vomit, it is partially digested and a yellow fluid, bile may be present. Regurgitation is usually passive. The head is lowered and food is expelled without effort. The food brought up by regurgitation is usually undigested, may have a tubular shape, and is often covered with a slimy mucus. Your dog will often try to eat the regurgitated material. Indeed, many dogs will also try to eat what they have just vomited as well.

### **Conventional Treatment**

The treatment will solely depend on what the suspected cause of the vomiting is.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's vomiting problems**

- Glycyrrhiza glabra (licorice): is a very powerful anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, and anti-allergenic for the intestines, bladder, kidney and the whole digestive tract. Good for peptic ulcers, reducing pain and helping to heal the stomach lining.
- Ulmus fulva (slippery elm) good digestive herb rich in trace minerals – manganese, iodine, protein and mucilage. Used by holistic vets to treat a range of chronic and acute digestive disorders and to improve the health of the digestive tract.
- Althaea officinalis (marshmallow), is well known for treating digestive problems and soothing painful, inflamed mucus membranes in the digestive tract.
- Ginger may also work well along with chamomile and nux vomita.

### **What you can do at home**

Fast your dog for at least one full day before you try giving them any food whatsoever. This of course will depend on what you Vet tells you to do depending on the probable cause of the vomiting. Offer only water and then on the second day start offering a very bland diet frequently and in small amounts. Usually the diet is cooked rice and cooked hamburger.

Always give your dog fresh unchlorinated and unflouridated water.

Make sure your garbage can and any other areas that offer "pickings" for your dog are cleaned up promptly.

Consider an allergy elimination diet if your dog started vomiting right after having a particular brand or food or treat. Or discontinue the treats and see if that helps.

If your dog only vomits once in awhile there should be nothing to worry about. If however your dog is continuously vomiting and can't even keep water down do NOT let this go on for more than 24 hours. Get to the Vet immediately. If your dog is a small breed DO NOT WAIT 24 hours. Smaller breeds dehydrate quite rapidly.

Check out all the dog food in your house for ingredients. It may be that your dog has developed a food allergy to the food you have been feeding him.

Consider changing his diet to a high quality commercial feed, or go raw organic if you are able to.

## **WORMS**

### **Signs**

Look for these signs if you dog may have worms. A change in your dog's appetite, coughing or hiccupping (from coughing up worm larvae from lungs) and in puppies, look for a distended abdomen.

You may also notice weight loss, a dull coat, weakness, diarrhea and vomiting and may also see spaghetti like worms in the vomit or feces. The spaghetti like worms are round worms. For tape worm you would see segments that look like white rice in the stool or on the fur of the anus.

### **Causes**

The causes of worms are roundworm, tapeworm, whipworm, hookworm, which live primarily in the dog's intestine and the heartworm, which lives within the heart and in the blood vessels leading from the heart to the lungs.

There are two types of **Roundworm**, the *Toxocara canis* and *Toxascaris leonine*.

Puppies may be born with roundworms. Roundworm larvae are tiny enough to migrate through the placental blood supply to the fetal liver or lungs. Soon after birth the juvenile roundworms begin migrating from the liver and lungs to the intestine where they grow to adults and begin laying eggs. Within three weeks after birth, puppies can begin shedding roundworm eggs into the environment.

A second source of infection is through the mother's milk.

A third possibility is if the young animal eats an egg found in fecal contamination of food or water bowls, the nesting box or other environmental sources.

**Tapeworms** are equipped with both male and female reproductive organs, and produce millions of eggs. The egg-filled sections break loose when they reach the end of the worm, and are carried through the host's intestine with the digested food. They leave the host in the feces and the eggs get scattered all over. If another animal swallows the feces, the eggs hatch and grow inside the animal's body.

**Hookworms** hang out in the intestines and can also be transmitted to humans. Dogs become infected through four routes - orally, through the skin, through the mother's placenta before birth, and through the mother's milk.

The **whipworm** that affects dogs (*Trichuris vulpis*) is smaller than the other worms (two inches maximum) and rarely seen as it lives in the cecum (where the small and large intestine meet). The head is skinny versus its fat tail that gives the worm its whip shape and name.

Eggs are laid inside the large intestine and pass with the stool. The eggs need roughly 2 to 4 weeks to form embryos and become capable of infecting a new host. Contaminated soil is the source of infection.

The **heartworm** is called *Dirofilaria immitis*. Heartworms may infect more than 30 species of animals and humans. When a mosquito carrying infective heartworm larvae bites a dog and transmits the infection, the larvae grow, and migrate in the body. These live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels. The females release their offspring into the blood stream.

### **Conventional Treatment**

**Whipworm** - The most common products are fenbendazole otherwise known as Panacur and febantel or Drontal Plus. Because of the long maturation cycle of young worms, a second de-worming some 75 days or so after the first worming is needed to clear the infection. Often another worming in between these doses is recommended to further control the whipworm numbers.

**Heartworm** - There is currently one drug approved by the FDA for use in dogs. This drug is an organic arsenical compound. Dogs receiving this drug therapy will typically

have had a thorough pretreatment evaluation of its condition and will then be hospitalized during the administration of the drug.

Melarsomine dihydrochloride or Immiticide has shown a high level of effectiveness and safety compared to any other adult heartworm treatment previously available. It is administered by deep intra-muscular injection into the lumbar muscles

The primary problem with the drug is after it has been administered there is often the development of severe pulmonary thromboembolism due to the presence of dead heartworms and lesions in the arteries and capillaries of the lungs. If heartworm treatment is effective, some degree of pulmonary thromboembolism will occur.

Clinical signs most commonly observed include fever, cough, blood in the sputum and potentially sudden death. Often dogs with severe infections will also require the administration of anti-inflammatory doses of corticosteroids.

The most effective drugs to get rid of the offspring of the heartworms are milbemycin oxime, selamectin, moxidectin and ivermectin. Their usage has not been approved by the FDA, however they are widely used by veterinarians as there are no approved microfilaricidal drugs currently available.

It is recommended that dogs that show the presence of heartworm offspring being treated the above drugs be hospitalized for at least eight hours following treatment for possible adverse reactions, including those resulting from rapid death of the young heartworms.

**Roundworms** and **hookworms** can be treated with Vermox, Combantrin-1 (mebendazole ) or Combantrin that have pyrantel embonate as the active ingredient.

**Tapeworms** are killed by different medications such as Droncit under the brand name of Praziquantel, which is given by injection of tablet. The tapeworm is killed and digested with the pet's food. It is not passed in the stool.

### **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's worm problems**

- Artemisia absinthium (also called Wormwood) a well respected herb used in Western and Eastern medicine that helps expel worms and has calmativ and antibiotic properties.
- Eugenia caryophyllata (Cloves). Cloves is one of the strongest antibacterial spices with anti parasitic, antiseptic and bactericidal properties. It also contains strong detoxifying agents and can help with nausea, vomiting and gas.
- Azadirachta indica (Neem) has anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties and helps to expel worms and cleanse the system.
- Ruta graveolens (also known as the Herb of Grace) or Rue noted for its ability to get rid of intestinal worms.

### **What you can do at home**

When walking your dog in a park, pick up his deposits and do not let him roll in or eat any other dog feces.

To make sure he is clear of diseases, make it a habit to have his stool tested on a regular basis for worms. Do this about twice a year.

If you live in a high risk area for heart worm, then have your dog screened more often.

Make sure your dog is flea free and keep him that way. Fleas are responsible for the spread of tapeworms.

When you clean out your dog's area, bed or crate, spray it with a strong saltwater solution and let it dry. This helps prevent worms.

If you plan to travel with your dog, check with your vet about disease risks in the area you are going to.

Avoid exposing your dog to stray animals, birds and dead rodents, which often harbor immature tapeworms that can mature inside your dog.

## **WOUNDS AND LACERATIONS**

### **Signs**

Dogs do seem to be able to collect a fine array of minor cuts, scrapes, bites and stings- especially the ones who are nosey, happy and bouncy outdoor lovers. Although it's almost a given your dog with at some point get a cut, scrape, abrasion, insect bite, or get into a fight with another animal, all these wounds and lacerations can hurt not to mention run the risk of infection.

Although most animals do tend to heal fairly quickly if they have strong immune systems and are healthy, the immediate pain, discomfort and swelling can be unpleasant and debilitating for your pet. It is very important to care for these wounds. It may look like a small wound, but it could have big consequences if you don't care for it properly.

If your dog has a lot of hair, you may not see some of the cuts etc. and only see him licking or "worrying" something on his coat. Always check him over when you see signs of this, and don't wait until you groom him or you could have an infected wound to deal with.

## **Causes**

Running into a sharp object, fights with other animals, fights with another dog, a fall off a couch or bed, a run in with a cat, a difference of opinion with a cow, a horse, a door slamming on his tail. There are many ways an animal can get a wound. Your job is to figure out how serious the wound is and then take what steps are necessary to help your dog.

## **Conventional Treatment**

Large or deep wounds will likely need stitches and don't wait too long to get to the vet or the edges of the wound will go necrotic and it makes stitching even more difficult. If your dog is bleeding profusely, has pale gums and rapid breathing CALL YOUR VET IMMEDIATELY your dog is in shock.

If you have a puncture wound, you need to have its depth assessed by a professional and find out what was damaged if anything. Most puncture wounds usually require antibiotics of some sort to battle infection.

If you have heavy bleeding try to stop it with a compress. If it persists, call the Vet.

Your dog may require pain killers as well and freezing to do the stitches or surgery to remove any foreign objects. E.g. the end of a stick or other object that punctured your dog

## **Herbal remedies that may assist your dog's wound problems (smaller wounds and lacerations)**

- Althaea officinalis root (marshmallow) is excellent for inflamed skin and mucus membranes, for abscesses, boils and other skin conditions.
- Melaleuca alternifolia is great for external inflammation. Is an anti-bacterial and anti-fungal. Reduces inflammation of the skin.
- Plantago lanceolata good for inflamed skin, burns, bites and small wounds. Acts as a mild astringent.
- Rosmarinus officinalis (Rosemary) a topical pain reliever, antiseptic and disinfectant herb. Other compounds in rosemary have shown anti-inflammatory abilities.
- Centella asiatica (Gotu Kola) is used for treating skin irritation and conditions. It stimulates the circulation and helps the skin heal.
- Ledum 6X is for stings and bruises and prevents wound infection.
- Apis 30C is used for bee and wasp stings or other skin conditions that cause swelling and itching.



### **What you can do at home**

To the best of your ability, supervise your dog while at play. It will let you see what they are doing and perhaps avert a "mishap".

Always keep a fully stocked first aid kit on hand in case you may need it if your dog needs help. (see section on what to have in a well stocked first aid kit)

Know how to use all the items in your first aid kit. Having to use it and not know what you are doing won't help you or your dog. Make sure your whole family knows where the kit is.

Keep your Vet's emergency number right where you can find it immediately.

If you have a wasps nest on your property, make sure you get rid of it. They can be aggressive and quite nasty when provoked.

If you have bees in your yard due to the kinds of flowers you have, try and keep your dog away from them by fencing the flowers off. This won't stop the bees, but it may stop your dog from romping in the flowers.

Supervision will also help you stop any fights that might get started over toys. Be careful you don't get into the middle of two sets of teeth that aren't paying too much attention to you because they are intent on fighting.

Make sure you keep a good sturdy collar on your dog if you need to "collar" them and haul them off each other.

If you know that your dog and another one don't get along too well, try and avoid them playing together. It's safer.

## CONCLUSION

Now that you have been introduced to the wonderful world of holistic/alternative medicine, you have so many more alternatives for the health and well-being of your dog. Rather than perhaps feeling frustrated with conventional medicines and treatments, you can now consider an extremely wide range of alternatives that may do your best buddy all the good in the world. Worth a try isn't it?

Just for a handy reference, if you wish to locate a holistic/alternative Veterinarian or other natural practitioner in your country, you can take advantage of the listings below. They are quite comprehensive and you can search worldwide for practitioners – whether you're in Canada or the UK, Australia or the USA (and other points in-between)

This is the Open Directory project and offers quite comprehensive listings with just a few clicks.

You can locate those specializing in animal acupuncture, aromatherapy, animal Chinese medicine, chiropractors, energy healers, herbalists, homeopaths, massage therapists, animal nutritionist, oxygen therapists, physical therapists and hydrotherapists and essence therapists for animals.

[http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Animal/Alternative\\_Medicine/Practitioners/](http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Animal/Alternative_Medicine/Practitioners/)

For the USA and other countries including Canada, UK and the USA, you can also use these sites.

The American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association

<http://www.holisticvetlist.com/>

Or this site offered by the Veterinary Institute of Integrative Medicine

<http://www.viim.org/findvets/vetlist.asp>

You can also visit the following other sites to search for members worldwide in acupuncture

The International Veterinary Acupuncture Society

<http://www.ivas.org>

The American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture

<http://aava.org>

The American Veterinary Chiropractic Association

<http://www.avca.com>

The Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy

<http://www.theavh.com>

For Holistic Veterinarians in Australia

<http://www.ava.com.au/aahv/head.html>

For Holistic Veterinarians in the UK

<http://www.bahnm.org.uk/>

For Holistic Veterinarians in Canada

<http://www.acreaturecomfort.com/holisticveterinarians.htm>

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