

# Holistic is Best

## Natural Care for a Sick Pet

by Dr. Shawn Messonnier



The best course of action for any pet that appears to be sick is to see a holistic vet early, before a disease can progress or before the pet has been made even more ill by improper conventional treatment.

### Downsides of Conventional Treatment

Many sick pets brought to a holistic vet's office may not have been formally diagnosed, even if they've been receiving medical treatment by a conventional doctor for weeks or months. In most cases, the standard blanket prescriptions of antibiotics and corticosteroids—regardless of the cause of illness—have failed to produce positive results. Worse, such drugs carry side effects that can make the pet even sicker; indiscriminate use of antibiotics, for example, has led to antibiotic resistance in bacteria, making it harder to treat serious infections when antibiotics are the only viable treatment option.

So by the time the holistic doctor sees them, the condition of these pets may have worsened. The good news

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is that with precise diagnosis of the underlying issues, most sickly pets can be treated with good success. Because a holistic approach to healthcare relies on individual factors, the exact treatment will vary according to the patient and situation. A cookie-cutter treatment will not be very helpful.

## Holistic Nutrition Therapy Helps

Owners can take several steps to provide relief for a suffering pet right away while awaiting the results of proper diagnostic tests. In my practice, three vet-supervised nutrition therapies have been shown to be effective in stabilizing a sick pet for the 24 to 48 hours needed to return test results before the appropriate treatment can be initiated. Ask the attending veterinarian for other safe, comforting measures he or she likes to recommend.

First, most sick pets benefit from receiving fluid therapy (intravenous or subcutaneous) in a veterinary hospital. The fluids rehydrate and help detoxify the pet by causing increased urination that flushes out cellular toxins.

Second, injectable vitamins C and B complex added to the fluids often have a temporary pick-me-up effect, reducing lethargy and improving appetite.

Third, using supplements selected to restore homeostasis also helps make the pet feel better and encourages healthy eating. I like to use a natural immunity support I developed called Healthy Chi, which contains amino acids, potassium, green tea, ginseng, gotu kola and the herb astragalus. Homeopathic combinations also can be useful; I've developed a natural remedy combining gallium, colchicum, hydrastis, anthraquinone and glyoxal.

## Case Studies Exemplify Success

Two recent cases illustrate the benefit of an informed holistic approach. Gus, a 7-year-old male standard poodle, had a history of inflammatory bowel disease and gastrointestinal cancer. He did well immediately following cancer surgery, but then

# Ten Favorite Natural Supplements for Pets

by Dr. Marjorie M. Lewter

*Our pets are members of our families, so naturally we want to keep them safe and healthy. These days, there is so much information available that it can be hard to sort through it all when our pets need help. It is advisable to seek professional help when there is a health question. Still, some supplements are safe and helpful for animals as well as people. Here are ten favorite supplements that are very safe and can be integrated into conventional veterinary care.*

### Rescue Remedy

Flower essences used for a calming effect. Perfect for vet visits, trauma, mild storm phobia, travel phobia. Dosage: one drop on the tongue; can be repeated every 10 minutes.

### Probiotics

Capsules containing normal bacterial flora to regulate digestive problems. Help with stress-related diarrhea, flatulence and antibiotic-associated gastric upset. Animal formulations such as FortiFlora are best, but other approaches can be used, such as acidophilus, Primadophilus or even a tablespoon of high-quality yogurt.

### Homeopathic Arnica Montana 30C

Very helpful to reduce bruising, swelling and pain from any type of trauma to muscles. Dosage: two pellets dissolved in the mouth every two to six hours for the first 48 hours.

### Homeopathic Belladonna 30C

For sudden high fever or extreme pain that is worse with touch and sensitivity to light and noise. Dosage: 2 pellets dissolved in the mouth once; then contact vet immediately.

### Coenzyme Q-10

Helps energy systems to be more efficient. Commonly used to help gingivitis, and is especially helpful for older animals with heart problems. Dosage: 15 mg per day for cats and small dogs; up to 90 mg daily for large dogs.

### Colostrum

Capsulated concentrated immunoglobulins to aid in immune mediated disorders such as allergies. Dosage: 1 capsule for cats and small dogs; 2 capsules for larger dogs.

### Glucosamine and MSM

Usually found in combination. Glucosamine helps to reduce cartilage degeneration in arthritis, and MSM (methylsulfonylmethane) has a direct anti-inflammatory effect. In addition, MSM provides the element sulfur to rebuild flexible tissues. Dosage: 500 mg of glucosamine and 500 mg of MSM for large dogs; proportionately less for small dogs.

### Slippery Elm Powder (*Ulmus fulva*)

Very soothing for stomach and intestines. Good for diarrhea, constipation, upset stomach, nausea, colitis. Available in health food stores. Dosage: 1/8 tsp twice daily for cats and small dogs; up to 1 tsp twice daily (can be mixed with water to administer).

### Milk Thistle (*Silybum marinarum*)

Milk thistle capsules and tinctures are helpful to support liver function. Good for cleansing toxins and supporting the liver when dogs have to take phenobarbital for epilepsy. Dosage: 100 mg per 10 pounds of body weight per day.

### Ginger

Ginger tea can be used to reduce stomach cramps in a horse with mild colic. Always seek veterinary help with signs of this very serious condition in horses, but you can give the tea while you wait for help. Dosage: To make ginger tea, slice a palm-sized piece of fresh ginger and steep in hot water. Give the liquid by syringe.

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# Holistic Care for Pets

by Dr. Lori D. Leonard

**H**olistic veterinary care is largely a matter of learning to view our pets in a different way. When a pet tells us, “Hey, my leg hurts; there’s something wrong with my leg,” there are two kinds of approaches. In the conventional approach, tests are run and antibiotics or pain relievers usually are prescribed. These may make the pet’s symptoms disappear temporarily, but the pet is soon back in the office with the same hurt leg. The problem returns because nothing was really solved. The holistic approach, however, involves finding the root cause of the leg problem and providing supportive care to the pet so that the imbalance is corrected. The result here is a permanent solution to the problem, which creates a happy pet and happy owner.

Holistic veterinarians are trained to look at the entire animal as well as the environment, behavior, emotions and family dynamics. Most of this is missed by the conventional approach because it is not considered to be important. In the conventional world, chasing down the disease is the priority, with doing more and more tests and procedures to get to that exact diagnosis. In holistic terms, the patient is observed at the moment for what is going on today, not for what happened last week or last month, and support is offered so that the animal can get better. The diagnosis, or “named disease,” is not as important as being cognizant of the behavioral, emotional and physical changes in the patient.

Paying attention to subtle changes in the behavior and habits of a pet on a daily basis can give owners advance notice that something is amiss and needs attention. It’s helpful to keep a diary or journal about a pet and annotating information such as favorite sleeping locations, patterns of behavior throughout the day, interactions with family members (other pets as well as humans) and individual preferences such as temperature of drinking water or desire (or not) to walk in the rain. Be sure to keep track of time of day, weather conditions, diet and other factors, such as changes in family schedules or people coming over to visit. This is very useful information that can be layered in with a pet’s physical changes to create a holistic picture of what is happening.

For example, a homeopathic approach to the “hurt leg” patient would involve learning more about the above factors. When did this start? Is there something that makes this better or worse? Once we start paying attention to these clues, there is a wealth of information to be gained about a pet. And your pet will love you for it.

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became lethargic and showed a disinterest in food. So, we conducted a fecal analysis and complete blood profile. While awaiting test results, I prescribed the recommended nutrition therapies, along with a special diet. The next morning, the owner reported that Gus was feeling and acting much better, including showing more interest in eating. His owner was pleased with this rapid response and relieved to avoid unnecessary medication.

A young Persian cat arrived in our office with a chronic herpes virus infection. Percy’s owner made an appointment because the feline had a congested nose and wasn’t eating as much as normal. Natural treatment for the herpes virus began with the amino acid lysine and the herb echinacea, both also helpful in preventing cold and flu. Supportive care for the general malaise and lack of appetite relied on the same recommended nutrition therapies and again resulted in overnight improvements in the pet’s attitude and appetite; the nasal congestion left during the following week.

While antibiotics and corticosteroids can be helpful in properly diagnosed cases, using natural therapies can provide quick relief without the harmful side effects often seen from the use of conventional medications.

*Shawn Messonnier, a doctor of veterinary medicine practicing in Plano, TX, is the award-winning author of The Natural Health Bible for Dogs & Cats and Unexpected Miracles: Hope and Holistic Healing for Pets. Visit [PetCareNaturally.com](http://PetCareNaturally.com).*



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