

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 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 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.