



Your Holistic Pet

A Guidebook to
Optimal Health



By Dr. Jeff Grognet

Your Holistic Pet: A Guidebook to Optimal Health

By Dr. Jeff Grognet, DVM, BSc(Agr)

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If you would like Dr. Jeff to give you an interview, please contact him at www.newearthvet.com.

This book is intended as a reference guide for people to understand what is often labelled as “holistic” veterinary medicine. The medical and nutritional advice in this book is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, and treatment. Always seek the advice of the appropriate medical provider regarding your pet’s health.

Jeff Grognet is a veterinarian and educator. A veterinarian for over 40 years, he was in the trenches as owner in private practice. He has always been educating students in his veterinary assistant classes, and clients throughout his practice life. He now focusses on teaching pet owners how to care for their pets holistically.

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What People are Saying:

I recently lost the furry love of my life to a tumor which we think was cancerous. I learned a few years ago the benefits of raw food and also learned that repeatedly vaccinating my senior dog was probably not necessary and while I'm glad I stopped vaccinating her I never knew that during the pandemic when we switched to kibble that I very likely facilitated the death of my dog. This book is a must read for every single pet owner and lover out there. Dr Jeff is spot on and explains very simply the importance of feeding RAW Protein based food and the dangers of vaccination and over medicating dogs and cats unnecessarily. Thank goodness there are amazing veterinarians out there like Dr Jeff who are willing to take a stand and tell the truth about harmful foods and chemicals that you absolutely should avoid. I am haunted and heartbroken to think that during the pandemic when there were raw meat shortages and I switched to a meat-based kibble I may have accelerated the growth a tumor my dog had. I didn't know about the tumor when we switched her, and until it was too late. Please share this book with friends. It will save lives!!!

Meredith A.

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Introduction

Why This Book Now?

Welcome to "Your Holistic Pet: A Guidebook to Optimal Health".

My name is Dr. Jeff Grognet, and I am a holistic veterinarian who truly cares about what you do for your furry friends.

In my over 40 years of experience, I've seen countless animals suffer from diseases that are often preventable through proper care and management. I am here to educate you on the deficiencies of conventional veterinary medicine and provide you with a comprehensive approach to caring for and treating your pet.

As a caring holistic veterinarian, I believe that our pets deserve the best care possible, and that includes avoiding unnecessary vaccinations, feeding them real and nutritious food, and avoiding toxic substances that could harm them.

While conventional veterinarians might tell you that vaccines are essential to keeping your pet healthy, I am here to tell you that there is a better way. I will show you what vaccines are

truly necessary, and how we can give them far less often than what is typically recommended.

When it comes to nutrition, many pet food companies prioritize their bottom line over the health of your pets. As a result, many commercial pet foods contain harmful chemicals and ingredients that can contribute to obesity, allergies, and other health issues.

I encourage you to feed your pets real and nutritious food that is free from toxins and harmful additives. After all, if you are hesitant to feed the same ultra-processed cereal to your two-year-old daughter or granddaughter three times a day for the rest of their life, why would you feed your pet such a food?

In addition to vaccines and nutrition, I am also concerned about the use of insecticides and heartworm medication. While these products may be convenient and effective in controlling parasites, they can also cause serious health problems, including neurological issues. That's why I believe in avoiding such products whenever possible and finding alternative solutions that are safer for our furry friends.

In this book, I am excited to share with you my knowledge and expertise on how to manage vaccines, avoid cancer, provide the best food, avoid toxicities, and manage obesity and allergies in your pets. My goal is to help you provide the best possible care for your pets and to help them live happy and healthy lives. So, if you're ready to learn more about holistic pet care, then join me on this journey towards optimal health for your furry friends!

If you want to follow me, go to my website and sign up for my newsletter. You can then see the education, much of it free, that I can provide for you.

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Nutrition

The cornerstone of health.

As a holistic veterinarian, I believe that it is important to consider the natural diet of our animal companions and provide them with the nutrients they require for optimal health. In the wild, dogs and cats primarily consume meat products, including muscle tissue, small bones, brain tissue (lots of good fat there), and internal organs (think vitamins and minerals). While they may consume some vegetable matter from the intestines of their prey, this is not a significant addition to their diet, but it has been used as justification for manufacturers to add vegetable products to their formulations.

Unfortunately, many pet owners today feed their dogs and cats ultra-processed dry food, which can have many concerns that are not always addressed by the veterinary profession.

I believe it is important to raise awareness of these issues and educate pet owners about the potential risks associated with ultra-processed dry food. Rather than relying on the sale of certain foods for income, veterinarians should prioritize the

health and well-being of their patients by recommending natural, nutrient-packed diets that meet their unique needs. By doing so, we can help ensure that our animal companions thrive and live long, healthy lives.

What is the biggest hazard in commercial foods?

When it comes to dry kibble, one of the main components is carbohydrates, which typically make up over 50% of the food. It is needed to allow the extrusion of the food – the process of pushing it through a hole – at an extremely temperature of over 500 degrees.

These carbohydrates are often supplied by grains, although in grain-free diets they can come from peas, legumes, or potatoes.

Here is my take on the extrusion process and what we have to pay attention to.

There is a product on our grocery shelves made of corn and it is produced in the same way as pet food. The one I am familiar with is “Popcorn Twists”. There is another called “Cheese Puffs”. From a nutritional aspect, they are corn filled with air and then sprayed with flavoring to make them appealing.

Do we regard them as good nutrition? Of course not.

Toxins in Pet Food

In the case of grains, the most common addition is corn, which is cheap and readily available. Unfortunately, the corn used in pet food is typically feed-grade corn, which is harvested from fields and stored in large bins before being processed into livestock feed or pet food. It is not the human-grade corn you'd buy at the grocery store.

Studies show that over 50% of the corn used in pet food is contaminated with molds and fungi, which can produce poisons such as aflatoxin. This toxin can have a variety of effects on the body, including damage to the liver.

The problem is that many pet food companies do not test for aflatoxin, so it can be present in the food without the owner's knowledge.

In September 2021, Mars Pet Care Canada issued a limited recall of Whiskas dry cat food due to mycotoxin contamination, which was found to be the result of the corn used in the food.

The more disturbing issue is that they did not reveal the cause of the recall until Costco did research into it. Cats are extremely sensitive to mycotoxins and they could have showed illness and, without that information, veterinarians would have been in the dark.

Another concerning ingredient in pet food is glyphosate, a herbicide used to kill weeds in plant crops. It has been found in high amounts in dog and cat foods and is a known carcinogen.

Glyphosate is eliminated from the body by the liver, so its presence in pet food can also affect liver function. This is particularly concerning as pets are often exposed to glyphosate not only through their food but also through environmental exposure.

We are seeing foods highly contaminated with this toxin because genetically-modified plants are resistant to glyphosate. They are sometimes called “Round-Up Ready” to signify that farmers can spray the crops to control weeds and the production plant grows just fine.

This is a heightened worry in the legumes (though the problem is across the board). They are often sprayed with this chemical and it ends up in the dog/cat food. There is now a concern that the glyphosate can cause a deficiency of taurine by interfering with its synthesis. This is a supposed cause of the heart condition hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM).

Finally, the processing of pet food can also result in the formation of advanced glycation end products (AGEs). These are produced when food is subjected to high temperatures through the rendering or extrusion process, and can be a contributing factor to various diseases, including osteoarthritis, kidney disease, diabetes, and even cancer. It is important to note that AGEs are found primarily in extruded kibble, not in raw or minimally processed foods.

It is crucial for you to be aware of the potential hazards of pet food. If you suspect that your pet may have been exposed to toxins or other harmful substances, it is important to seek veterinary care and discuss ways to support your pet's health and detoxification.

Ingredients

As a pet owner, it is important to consider not only the ingredients but also the quality and source of those ingredients in pet food. Unfortunately, very few veterinarians take the time to educate themselves on what goes into the foods. They do not know much beyond the material supplied to them from the major pet food manufacturers.

Let's start with the label and look for the source of the meat. Better quality foods will specify the species of the meat, such as chicken or beef meal, rather than just "meat meal." In the case "meat meal", the company can substitute different meat types. This is important if you have a dog or cat with food sensitivities. If you see "meal", it is a rendered product. This can be a cause for concern. Rendered animal products may come from animals that are dead, diseased, disabled, or dying (the four Ds that are not allowed in the human food chain).

There have been cases where pet food contained horsemeat that was not listed on the label. As well, testing revealed that the food contained the drug pentobarbital, which is used to

euthanize horses, as well as dogs and cats. It is a common belief among practitioners that this type of occurrence is only rarely revealed because food is not tested often enough in the pet food industry.

Fish meal is an interesting example of a rendered product that may not be as nutritious as it seems. I used to think that if a food contained salmon meal that it would be an excellent protein source and also be enriched with the oil that is found in salmon.

Despite being a good protein and oil source, the fish is heated and the oil is removed and moved into the human food chain. The fish meal used in pet food is a waste product. Ironically, it must be supplemented with additional oils to make it complete. Guess what the problem is? Oil is expensive to add in the feed so it is limited to the bare minimum.

Next, look for the term “byproducts”. Byproducts are parts of the carcass that we don't eat, such as organs or undeveloped eggs. It is important to note that pictures on the bag of an

entire chicken are often just a fantasy. And the issue is that it is most often changed to a "meal".

Here is the technical definition. A byproduct is defined as ground, rendered, and clean parts of the carcass of slaughtered poultry. It includes things such as necks, feet, bones, undeveloped eggs, and intestines. The meal should be exclusive of feathers, except in such amounts as might occur unavoidably in good processing practices.

In byproducts, the poultry parts are natural, but the "rendered" part isn't. If you want to make the healthiest choice for your friend, then a byproduct meal should not be the first ingredient.

Manufacturers of pet food often use cheap ingredients of questionable nutritional value. It is important to note that when formulating a diet, the nutritionists working for the pet food companies aim to provide minimal levels of protein and fat and not go above that. For example, an adult dog's diet may be formulated to have 21% protein and 12% fat, while cats require a higher protein content of 32% or more.

I want to address a myth that has arisen.

Have you heard that high-protein diets can damage our pets' kidneys? This belief stems from a limited study conducted in the 1980s on rats that had 75% of their kidneys surgically removed. The study found that high-protein diets made the rats sick because their kidneys were not able to eliminate the nitrogenous waste produced.

However, this conclusion cannot be extrapolated to healthy dogs or cats, and the data does not support the notion that high-protein diets are harmful to our pets' kidneys. It is only harmful to rats that have been surgically altered.

Guess who propagates the information from this study to keep the myth alive? arose? It is the manufacturers of lower protein foods that didn't want to see their market share diminish.

Think of the cat or dog in the wild. Their protein is not restricted and I have yet to see a paper about kidney ailments causing their demise at a young age. It just doesn't make sense.

When it comes to formulating diets, pet food manufacturers often use a concept called least cost formulation (LCF). This approach aims to meet specific protein, fat, and calorie levels

by manipulating the ingredients used in the diet. While this method helps manufacturers keep costs down, it also means that the components in the food can vary based on ingredient availability and cost, resulting in inconsistent diets over time, all with the idea of lowering the production cost.

Cheaper pet foods are often formulated using LCF, which can lead to problems for pets with ingredient sensitivities or allergies. In contrast, more expensive pet foods use a fixed formula that lists a set of ingredients that do not vary over time. However, it is important to note that the quality of ingredients in a fixed formula diet may not necessarily be better than those in an LCF diet.

You need to carefully consider the quality and source of ingredients in your pets' food, rather than solely relying on protein levels or the brand name. And, don't look at the pictures on the front of the can or bag!

It is also important to be aware of the potential inconsistencies in pet food diets and any additives or supplements that may be present.

One of my biggest concerns in animal nutrition is the prevalence of large-scale pet food manufacturers selling diets through veterinary hospitals that are designed for specific disease conditions. While these diets may contain essential supplements to improve the health of animals with these conditions, it raises an important question.

Why aren't these supplements, which are proven good for health, included in all diets. The answer, of course, is cost.

Here is an example. One manufacturer created a diet supplemented with certain fatty acids (oils) that would help puppies learn better in their training programs.

This means that the other foods on the shelf aren't optimal for dogs in training. Pet owners were inadvertently purchasing suboptimal food for their pets. Yet, there was no discussion on the responsibilities of the pet food manufacturers to create a diet that satisfied all the real needs of the pets.

You may be wondering why veterinarians are not at the forefront of this desire to improve animal health through better nutrition. In my experience, veterinary education on nutrition is

limited, with only one hour of lecture dedicated to the topic in my schooling over 40 years ago. Moreover, the information that we do receive on nutrition often comes directly from pet food manufacturers, which introduces bias into the information we receive.

To overcome this bias and learn more about animal nutrition, veterinarians must engage in self-study, since most independent education is not offered at conferences or provided by pet food companies. Unfortunately, many veterinarians do not delve into this type of education, which perpetuates misconceptions about animal nutrition.

One of the most common misconceptions is that adding people food to a pet's diet can upset the balance of the food. While it's true that pet food is formulated to contain specific nutrient levels, adding meat or vegetables to a regular food can actually improve its nutritional value without causing harm. Don't forget that the foods are made with minimal levels. There is no upper ceiling in fat and protein contents.

Another mistake that veterinarians make is suggesting that pet owners feed their animals only one type of dry food and never vary it. This advice is akin to a pediatrician telling a parent to feed their child only one type of cereal product that contains all necessary nutrients.

Just because a food can be formulated to contain all necessary nutrients based on studies, it doesn't mean that it should be the only thing an animal eats. In fact, the trend in human nutrition is to provide a varied diet with fresh veggies and meat, which provides the best nutrition possible.

Making Your Own Food

I believe that proper nutrition is crucial to the health and wellbeing of our furry friends. While it may be tempting to opt for the convenience of commercial pet food, I recommend considering feeding a real food diet to your dog or cat.

One option is frozen pet food, which has become increasingly popular in the industry. Another option is freshly prepared food, although this has a limited shelf life. Alternatively, you can make your own pet food, which allows you to have complete control over the ingredients and their quality.

If you currently feed kibble, I recommend adding some real whole food to it. This will provide your pet with additional nutrients that may not be present in commercial pet food. You can add meat for protein and choose high-nutrient vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, zucchini, cabbage, and Swiss chard. Avoid high-starch vegetables and grains. The food already has lots of that!

Some veterinarians may warn against adding anything to commercial pet food, as it may upset the balance of nutrients.

However, just like humans, pets can vary their diet over time and compensate for any imbalances. And more importantly, the balance they are talking about is based on minimums.

If you are considering a cooked diet, there are two options: purchasing a cooked diet, or making your own. Purchased cooked diets can be expensive and may not be practical for larger dogs, but they can be a good option for picky eaters.

Making your own cooked diet allows you to choose high-quality ingredients and tailor the protein and carb ratio to your pet's needs.

I recommend considering diets that are high in meat content for dogs and cats as it limits their carbohydrate consumption. This type of food is ideal for both species, as they are naturally designed to thrive on a diet rich in meat.

Dog Food Recipe

If you are unfamiliar to feeding real food, here is a recipe that you can begin with for your canine friend. It is similar to the formulation of a commercial diet, and it is a good way to ease you into the idea of producing your own food. It will get you started.

This is NOT designed as a sole food and should be mixed with other foods or used as an adjunct to a commercial food (preferably canned).

The key with food is VARIETY. We can't feed rice and hamburger and expect a dog to thrive. Variety is the spice of life. Variety is also the way we are going to ensure that the needed nutrients are present. Here is a listing of what we can put in a diet.

1. Meat. This can be any type of meat but should include organs as well. For example, beef, lamb, pork, chicken, elk, deer, ostrich, and for organs, kidneys, liver, and heart. Fish and eggs are also a source.

2. Leafy greens. This is spinach, cabbage, beet greens, chard, zucchini, broccoli, bok choy, or kale. Or, frozen bags of cauliflower, broccoli, and carrots.
3. Legumes. This includes lentils, peas, and beans. Though high in protein, having them once or twice a week is suggested as enough.
4. If bones are not fed (and consumed), a calcium supplement needs to be added. This can be a teaspoon of bone meal for each 20 pounds body weight daily, or 500mg calcium carbonate for the same 20 pounds.
5. A vitamin and mineral supplement. There are several available and each has its own directions on how to use it in a food recipe. If you are feeding cats, make sure there is a source of taurine.
6. A source of omega-3 fatty acids. This is provided through salmon oil (or flax seed oil). The high dose for therapy (like treating allergies) is 1000mg salmon oil (containing about 40% omega-3 fatty acids) for each 10 to 15 pounds body

weight. We give 1/3 of that for supplementation purposes. Introduce this slowly, and if there is diarrhea, reduce it for a short time.

The next question is how to put this together. Generally, we want more than 60% meat and the rest as vegetables. You can go very high with the meat, but this does reduce the contribution of the vegetables, and the antioxidants, minerals, and vitamins they supply. The veggies should go through a blender to increase availability.

Cat Food Recipe

This is a raw pork recipe that I want to attribute to:

<https://www.rawfeedingforibdcats.org/>

Ingredients:

- 28 oz. raw pork, boneless
- 1.6 oz. raw chicken liver
- 1.6 oz. raw beef kidney
- 1 teaspoon finely ground eggshell
- 7 (500 mg) capsules salmon oil
- ½ teaspoon vitamin supplement (There are several multivitamins for cats. I like Rx Vitamins Essentials)
- 1 large egg yolk

Instructions:

1. Combine the eggshell powder and vitamin supplement in a small bowl.
2. Chop the pork, liver, and kidney into pieces that will fit through the meat grinder (or use a powerful blender).

3. Place a bowl under the mouth of the grinder and feed the pork and organs through it.
4. Add the salmon oil capsules intermittently while grinding the other ingredients.
5. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and add the dry supplements and egg yolk.
6. Add water as needed to combine the mixture then portion and freeze or refrigerate.

Notes: The cut of pork you choose will determine the fat content of the recipe. Pork loin is generally a leaner cut of meat and makes a great starter meat for cats new to raw food. If your cat needs more calories or fat in his diet, you could swap out some of the pork for raw chicken thighs, keeping the skin. If you prefer not to include kidney in your cat's diet, increase the raw chicken liver to 3.2 oz. This diet has pork in it which may help some cats with food allergies. To take it further, you could add pork liver rather than chicken liver.

Raw Feeding

The option I've used for many years in both cats and dogs in my life is a raw food diet, which comes in two types. The first is the whole prey model, which is based on what a dog or cat would eat naturally if they caught and ate an entire animal. The 8-1-1 ratio, which includes eight parts raw meat, one part secreting organ, and one part bone, is suitable for carnivores like dogs and cats, and does not contain vegetables.

The second option is the 7-1-1-1 diet, which is similar to the previous diet, but includes 10% vegetables to provide additional nutrients and fiber. Vegetables can also assist dogs with their bowel movements. However, adding vegetables is not always necessary, unless the bowel movements become hard and difficult to pass.

If you are considering feeding your pet a raw food diet, and it is going to be a meat-based raw food diet, it does require the addition of the right amount of bone to provide calcium and to change the bowel movement character. Adding too much bone can lead to dry and chalky bowel movements, while adding too

little bone can cause softer stools and a lack of calcium in the body.

Some raw meat diets do not contain bone, and in such cases, supplements are required to make the diet balanced. Calcium supplements, along with other trace minerals and vitamins, can be added to the diet in powder form, which can be found online.

Bones for Dogs and Cats

I often receive questions about the appropriate bones to give to dogs and cats. The reason I suggest feeding raw meaty bones is because gum disease affects 80% of dogs over three years old, and the bones provide calcium, micro-minerals, fat, collagen, and vitamin C that are all beneficial for bone growth. Cats also benefit from addition of bones. Additionally, bones aid in abrasion and teeth cleaning.

I remember seeing one of our cats consume an entire rabbit in one sitting and then lie around while digesting it. The cat looked like a bloated whale. This made me appreciate that they can digest the meat and the bones just fine.

However, there are negative aspects of bones to consider as well. Bones can cause tooth fractures, intestinal blockages if swallowed, and punctures in the gut lining, especially with cooked bones as they are more brittle. We observe more of these issues in dry-fed dogs as kibble reduces stomach acidity, making it difficult for dogs to dissolve bones.

One report revealed that 200 dogs were fed oxtail bones with meat for six years without any intestinal damage. This suggests that raw meaty bones can be provided for chewing, and the stomach can handle and dissolve them.

Based on my experience, I recommend the following rules for feeding bones:

1. Never feed cooked bones. Raw bones with meat on them are ideal for lubrication and promoting chewing.
2. The best bones for dogs and cats are necks, wings, ribs, and oxtail. Pork bones are not recommended as they are thick and hard.
3. Match the bone size to the animal's size. Avoid giving bones that can be easily swallowed.
4. Do not feed large weight-bearing bones such as femurs, which are hard and can fracture teeth.
5. Feed bones once or twice a week to ensure regular chewing and teeth cleaning.

6. And finally, bones do not cause aggression in dogs or cats, contrary to some beliefs held by pet owners and even some veterinarians.

Vaccines

Hazards of Vaccines

As a holistic veterinarian, I approach vaccines by considering both the protection they provide and the potential risks they pose to health.

One of the hazards associated with vaccines is the formation of tumors, such as feline fibrosarcoma in cats, which can be triggered by any injection. This means that the more vaccines given, the higher the risk of tumors. Although some debate exists over whether vaccines containing adjuvants cause more tumors than those without, we now know that there is very little difference between the two types of vaccines.

What is the solution to this? Some veterinarians started injecting vaccines as far down on the leg as possible. Many people think this is done to reduce the incidence of tumor formation. It doesn't.

If you inject down the leg and the tumor begins growing there, you have a better chance of resolving it by amputating the leg.

This is not a great reason, but digging the tumor out from between the shoulder blades is very difficult.

The new thinking is to give cats the vaccines, or any injections, in the side of the belly where the loose skin is behind the ribs and forward from the hind leg. It is called the paralumbar fossa. Owners can often pick them up there with petting the cat and surgery can be quite successful.

Ironically, we are seeing the same trend of injecting down the legs in dogs. You are justified in asking why. Dogs are not reported to have tumors triggered by an injection of vaccine.

The confounding fact is that I was told by a representative from one of the major vaccine companies that injecting down the leg actually predisposes them to tumor formation.

However, the veterinarians that are injecting down the legs are still administering vaccines annually or triennially, resulting in a high number of vaccines overall. We can do better!

In dogs, vaccines have been associated with diseases such as hypertrophic osteodystrophy and immune-mediated hemolytic

anemia (IMHA). IMHA occurs when the body produces antibodies against the membrane on the red blood cells in circulation, leading to a life-threatening disease.

Research has shown conflicting results on the exact role of vaccines in IMHA, with studies funded by vaccine manufacturers showing no correlation and independent studies showing a correlation. I think that the focus of the companies – that an event has to happen within a day or two of the vaccination – means we miss a lot of adverse events.

Allergic reactions to vaccines are also possible, ranging from mild cases of hives to life-threatening reactions. If a dog or cat has had a previous vaccine reaction, it is important to consider their history when deciding whether to administer vaccines in the future. Overall, it is crucial to weigh the benefits and risks of vaccines on a case-by-case basis and to approach vaccinations with a holistic perspective.

Vaccinations to Avoid

Many conventional veterinarians continue vaccinations in animals that have had a reaction by giving drugs to prevent a reaction. I do not agree with the practice of giving antihistamines prior to administering vaccines. There is no guarantee that this will prevent an allergic reaction in animals that may be predisposed to allergies. Instead, it is better to limit the number of vaccines we give and reduce their frequency. Do you see a common theme that keeps arising here?

Some vaccines, such as the feline infectious peritonitis vaccine, have been shown to provide no benefit in protection from the disease. In fact, vaccinated cats tend to die faster than those who were not vaccinated.

Similarly, the coronavirus vaccine in dogs is unnecessary as the disease does not typically cause illness. The study that was used for licensing could not elicit disease in the non-vaccinated (placebo) group. Why do we need a vaccine against a virus that causes no harm?

For dogs, the core vaccine should contain distemper and parvovirus. I recommend a one-time vaccine for puppies older than 16 weeks of age, followed by a titer test a month later to ensure a response. I call it the “One and Done”.

This approach is considered radical by some, but studies suggest that immunity to both parvovirus and distemper can last for at least nine years and possibly a lifetime.

For cats, the core vaccine consists of panleukopenia, rhinotracheitis, and calicivirus. One vaccine followed by another a month later may be given to kittens, but these can also last for seven years or more.

Non-core vaccines, such as the leptospirosis vaccine, should be considered on an individual basis. This disease is picked up by drinking contaminated water that has been urinated in by the infected animal. The immunity produced by the limited strains in the vaccine does not prevent all cases, and the vaccine is the most likely to cause a vaccine reaction in dogs. I recommend foregoing this vaccine and testing dogs for leptospirosis if they

show symptoms of the disease, followed by antibiotics if necessary.

Obesity

Why are pets heavy?

As a caring holistic veterinarian, I am deeply concerned about the epidemic of obesity in our beloved cats and dogs. It breaks my heart to see that over 50% of them are overweight, leading to various health problems such as diabetes, joint pain, and increased cancer risk in dogs, and diabetic conditions and skin problems in cats.

The root cause of this problem lies in the commercial diets available for our pets. Kibble diets are high in carbohydrates, which are not suitable for their bodies. A natural diet for cats and dogs is high in protein, high in fat, and low in carbohydrates. For instance, when cats eat their natural prey, such as mice, the carbohydrate content is well below 10%.

In cats, the liver metabolizes the excessive carbohydrates into fat, just like how a person's body processes potato chips.

Therefore, a high-protein, high-fat, and low-carb diet is ideal for cats, as it helps them maintain a lean and fit body.

In fact, switching overweight cats to a total meat diet can often help get diabetic cats off insulin and improves their health.

To achieve this ideal diet for cats, one option is to feed them a completely canned food diet that is 90% or more meat and low in carbs. Dry kibble food should be avoided with its high amount of carbs. Another option is to provide a raw food diet, which meets the nutritional needs of cats and promotes their overall health.

For dogs, we need to follow similar principles, although they can tolerate more carbs than cats due to being omnivores. Nevertheless, excessive carb intake can lead to weight gain, making it harder to manage their health. Thus, we should prioritize feeding dogs diets that are high in protein and fat, with limited carbs.

I know that the health of our pets is closely linked to their nutrition. By providing them with the right balance of nutrients and avoiding excessive carbs, we can help them maintain a healthy weight and enjoy a happy and active life.

Parasite Control

A Historic Look at Insecticide Toxicity

We'll look at a bit of history before we look at modern products.

There is a flea product that was introduced in the 1980s for use in dogs and sold by veterinarians. The insecticide was called permethrin and it actually worked quite well and killing fleas.

The problem that it had though was that it was toxic to cats. If you put the insecticide onto a cat's skin, it would reliably cause neurological issues and likely death.

Veterinarians took the product off their shelves due to this safety reason. The company producing it salvaged the sales by moving it into pet stores so they could sell it in the lay market.

Though the packaging on generic permethrin products does state that it should not be used in cats, we still see it used mistakenly by owners that do not read the packaging and then apply it to their cats. It can even poison a cat if the cat sleeps next to a treated dog! It causes severe neurological issues and often death.

Modern-Day Insecticides

The point of bringing up permethrins is to show you that insecticides can cause very severe harm.

When it comes to parasite control, there have been immense strides in research and the introduction of new products for control of parasites in dogs and cats. This has come with a price.

If your pet is on a product that controls fleas and ticks, here is a task for you. Do an Internet search for the product name and the word toxicity and see what comes up. I will do one here as an example.

Bravecto is a convenient tablet that is given every three months for flea and tick control. It is a potent insecticide and it works on many other parasites as well. Shortly after it was released, it was evident that we were seeing issues with its administration. The number of reported side effects has been immense, but little action seems to be taken on it.

The most likely issue with the product is its propensity for dogs to start to having seizures. These seizures can be severe enough

that they need to be medicated for the rest of their lives. It can happen after just one dose of Bravecto.

Here is my take on any of these oral or topical insecticides.

When the dose is given, blood levels of insecticide immediately rise. They stay elevated for a time and then slowly fall. Once they get below a certain level, they don't kill fleas as well as they should. That is when another dose is given.

Here is the issue – the insecticide in the body has not fallen to zero. It is still there but ineffective. Adding the next dose means that the amount in the body rises even further than the first time. There is a constant level of insecticide in the body.

Here is a thought for you. Would you give such a medication to a two-year-old girl? I hope not!

Heartworm

The other parasite that the newer products work on is heartworm. Back in the 1980s and 90s, the administration of heartworm medication was limited to a few months and determined by the climate of the area in which the dog resides. In other words, if there are only a couple months where it is warm enough for the heartworm larvae to mature in the mosquito that carried it, then we really need to treat for a couple of months for every year.

In the last decade or more, the propensity has been to give animals medication every month and continue throughout the year, despite there being no need for heartworm prevention. The justification has been that other parasites can be picked up and we should be deworming monthly so that they can't infest people around them.

What we find is that the organizations that make suggestions that we should be giving medications every month are funded by the same manufacturers that make the insecticide products. There is a tremendous conflict of interest.

The solution for parasite control is to evaluate what parasites pose a risk to your pet and give the least toxic medication as little as possible.

The method suggested by many holistic practitioners is that we need pets on the most nutritious food we can supply so that they can ward off the parasites and do not need parasite prevention.

Cancer

The Cancer Epidemic

Something that I do have to talk about is the epidemic of cancer that we've been seeing in our pets and how it's changed in the last 40 years.

When I graduated as a veterinarian, I was told that the only dog breed that was prone to cancer to any degree was the Boxer. So if you saw a Boxer with any lump in the skin, you would assume it was malignancy until proven otherwise. No other breeds were as susceptible to cancer.

Fast-forward to now. We see so much cancer that is truly devastating.

Golden retrievers, which were at an average cancer risk 30 years ago, now have difficulty living past 10 years of age. The main cancer they fall victim to is the malignant hemangiosarcoma. It is usually a tumor in the spleen or in the heart. It causes acute bleeding and death from becoming anemic.

Bernese Mountain dogs have their own types of cancer specific to their breed like a histiocytosis, and similarly rarely get past 10 years old.

What Causes Cancer?

So why do we see so much cancer? I think it is multifactorial.

There certainly is an impact of genetics. This is why we see so much cancer in certain breeds of dogs and even in some breeds of cats. There is a propensity in certain lines of cats to be susceptible to the feline fibrosarcoma triggered by injections.

In the case of golden retrievers, certain studs have been so popular that they end up being related to many offspring. One stud can literally take over the breed, especially if his semen is frozen.

The problem is, of course, that if he carries bad genes, he will pass them on to a lot of those offspring.

The other effect is toxins. These can be toxins in the environment, toxins that are supplied in the food, and of course poisons that we introduce into the body for parasite control.

We need to look at all those factors in an attempt to get our cancer incidence down.

Let's look at diet and cancer. There is a prescription diet formulated for dogs and cats with cancer, also known as neoplasia. These diets are formulated with lower carbohydrates so that those simple sugars can't feed the cancer cells. They tend to be a little bit higher in protein and very high in fat so that the calories are coming from those two sources.

In the early studies on these diets, they were used in dogs with leukemia to try to maintain their weight and therefore they could live longer. The problem with leukemic dogs is that their body condition fails. They get very skinny and they die from malnutrition.

The other thing we know about cancer, is that the body is continuing to produce new cancer cells over time. In most cases the cancer cells do not survive. They go through a natural death or the body mounts an immune response to the cancer cells and kills them.

So that the body can ward off cancer, we want it to have the best immunity possible. And in my mind, that comes from providing the best nutrition we possibly can. So certainly I

would endorse the idea of the high-protein high-fat low carbohydrate diet for all dogs and cats to try and prevent them from getting this deadly disease.

Allergies in Dogs and Cats

What Pets Get Allergic to

There are three main things that our pets can react to.

One is fleas. This is the easiest allergy to manage. Get rid of the fleas and there can't be a reaction. The reason people fail at this one is that they don't take fleas seriously enough. Make sure that you tackle it head-on and remember – no survivors. Flea control is beyond this book, but you get the idea.

The most common allergy is what we call atopic, also known as environmental. You can liken this to hay fever in people except that the symptom in dogs and cats is itchy skin. The allergen can be inhaled or it contacts the skin.

The last allergy is a food allergy. They are supposedly not as common as atopic allergies, but I think there is a complex association between propensities to allergies and the food that is supplied.

Technically, a food allergy is to a specific ingredient, usually a protein, in the food. It can be from a meat such as chicken or it can be to grains such as corn, wheat, and even rice.

There is also concern that the processing of commercial foods creates variations on the original protein and that is what the pet reacts to.

Managing Allergies

The standard (conventional) way to treat allergies is with medication. Originally it was a steroid such as prednisone. It was effective but plagued with severe side effects.

More recently, immune-modifying medications have been introduced. Apoquel (tablet) and Cytopoint (injection). These can work, but they are expensive, tend to stop working after a while, and there is a lot of debate on possible side effects.

Then, there are foods made specifically for allergic skin disease. These are now hydrolyzed protein diets. The manufacturer takes a food ingredient that the pet could react against and breaks it down chemically so that the body can't recognize it and thus fails to react to it.

These foods have still been shown to cause reactions to the original ingredients in the food. It is not fully converted. Also, the quality of the ingredients can be questionable. One hydrolyzed product was "constructed" from chicken feathers. And, they are very expensive.

An Example of Allergy Management

My own dog, Shay, who is now a five-year-old Border Collie cross, has had allergies since a puppy.

He has two symptoms – loose bowel movements (liquid) and itchy skin.

The main “treatment” is his diet. We quickly found out that he could not tolerate any processed food. We moved him to a raw food.

The common meats – chicken and beef – caused bowel issues. He couldn't tolerate fish. Chicken specifically caused a tremendous itch.

We now feed him exotic meats such as llama, venison, kangaroo, and goat. His bowels have settled down.

He suffers from periodic bouts of allergic skin issues. These are initiated by running in grass fields in the summer. The solution is to avoid the fields if we can. Also, we get him to rinse in the river at the end of the walk.

Conclusion

Final Words and Hope for the Future

This has been a very brief introduction to holistic ideas that I wanted you to know about. I hope it has you thinking that we need to supply the best care toward dogs and cats and, in that way, they can stay healthy longer.

You can probably see that my beliefs are a little bit different from most veterinarians. I can bet that you could find someone in authority who will say that my thoughts are invalid or won't work.

I do know what has served me well for several decades based on experience I've had at the hospital. Dogs and cats that are fed correctly don't need the number of veterinary visits that pets on commercial foods require. And fed the correct diet, their body condition is just so much better.

If you want to follow me, then go to www.newearthvet.com and sign up for the newsletter. I have free events going

continually, I have education through my newsletter, and I'm creating a bank of courses that can get you on the holistic way.

I wish you and your pets well with a healthy future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeff