

HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE FOR CAVALIERS

PART THREE



Holistic Modalities and Beginning Homeopathy

By: Larry A. Bernstein, VMD
©2011 Larry A. Bernstein, VMD

I have considered the items that have improved the health of our six generations of Cavaliers over the past twenty years and have broken it down to the following areas:

1. Limiting Vaccinations
2. Improving Nutrition
3. Homeopathic and Other Holistic Modalities
4. Stopping Suppressive Medical Treatments
5. Appropriate Supplements and Nutraceuticals

We will take each of these areas separately and this issue will begin to cover holistic medicine in more depth with a goal of delving more deeply into Homeopathic therapy in our next article.

What is Holistic Medicine?

There are a number of terms used to define or identify holistic medicine around the world. Holistic, Complementary, Alternative, Non-Traditional and Integrative are the ones that spring immediately to mind. Part of this confusing terminology abounds because this type of medicine involves so many different disciplines or modalities. Unfortunately, in many circles, there is also the perception that this is not “real” medicine. This has contributed to a constant philosophic, economic and regulatory struggle between the conventional and non-conventional factions within the medical community.

I find this perplexing since, up until the early 1900's; many of these “unconventional modalities” WERE the traditional areas of medicine. It should make one wonder why so many in the medical community have so easily discounted practices that successfully helped heal patients for hundreds and even thousands of years.

I am a great proponent of the more modern medicine (especially since I love toys and technology), and I still practice in both spheres. However, I could never embrace the idea of abandoning something good, something with such a positive historical track record. Using their (the strict conventional proponents) logic, if you are on antibiotics there would be no benefit to chicken soup in the new paradigm. Maybe that is a poor analogy as there is ALWAYS benefit from chicken soup according to my grandmother. I know I digressed but the main point of the introduction was to emphasize the fact that there are many different paths to healing and each should be tailored to

the specific case and not defined by what is trendy.

What is Allopathic Medicine?

The model adhered to these days is primarily the Allopathic (conventional) approach. There the symptoms are considered to be the disease and removal of the symptom is tantamount to curing the disease. A fever needs to be treated, with anti-inflammatories (anti-pyretics) until it is gone. We, so easily, can lose sight of the body's need for that fever to help the immune system deal with the infection or inflammation. In the conventional medical community; “fever gone equals problem solved.” This is simplistic but gets to the heart of the problem.

Allopathic medicine wants to diagnose the disease by finding everyone's commonality and play “name the disease.” Once they can name the disease then the “book” tells how to treat that disease. Never mind that there is an individual animal buried under the symptoms or that the “book” may keep changing the definitive therapy every few years. If it is in the “book,” it is the proper treatment. If it fails, then it is the fault of the “book” and not the veterinarian. Often, we need to look beyond the named disease and see the animal's entire world to choose the best therapies. This view can often include the whole household of animals AND, sometimes, even the owners are part of the case.

Now, off my soapbox and into the subject...

What is Holistic Medicine? - Expanded

Holistic is the umbrella for a plethora of modalities. The main areas include, TCM – Traditional Chinese Medicine, Nutritional, Nutraceuticals, Homeopathy, Homotoxicology, Western Herbal, Chiropractic, Ayurvedic, Western Herbs, Massage and Body Work and a number of other energy based techniques including Reiki, color and sound therapy and many more. It is a huge term in the broadest sense. You can then break some of these down even further. There are different types of chiropractic, different definitions of homeopathy around the world; TCM is actually composed of Acupuncture, Moxabustion, Herbal and Massage.

The main modalities we use with our Cavaliers include: Homeopathy, Acupuncture, Nutritional, Herbal,

Nutraceutical and Chiropractic as dictated by the case. We will consider these the main areas for our discussion but that is not to discount the power of other areas, we are merely, trying to bring clarity to such a huge subject.

Most of our readers should be familiar with Acupuncture, Chiropractic and Herbal by now. They are considered the most mainstream of the group. Nutrition was covered in the last article and we will be discussing supplements and Nutraceuticals in a few issues so we will stick with an overview of the most popular modalities. Then we will also present a more in depth discussion of Homeopathy in our next article.

All of these disciplines believe that the body contains a central force that keeps it in balance, protects it from disease and allows it to heal. When an animal is injured, gets sick or starts to age, this force can become weakened and the body becomes imbalanced. Think about the number of things that can happen to our animal companions in everyday life. We carry our dogs and cats around, they jump from heights, and they run and twist. We feed them (used to) commercial food that may contain by-products and preservatives. We ask our horses to jump and perform incredible feats, usually with someone on their back.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture began almost 4000 years ago in China and has survived to this day. In Chinese acupuncture, specific points throughout the body are stimulated or sedated to produce a local or generalized effect. These points are treated by needles, massage, heat and even lasers to balance the body's energy and promote healing. Modern scientists have studied acupuncture and feel that it causes the release of hormones, cortisone, natural pain killers, endorphins and many other substances that account for its incredible effects. It also stimulates the local tissues to respond and the blood supply to increase. It is nice to have a "conventional" explanation to help understand how acupuncture may work but it is important to remember that traditional acupuncture deals with energy and balance.

Chiropractic

Chiropractic has long been used to help people, but it has also been accepted for use in animals. You can well imagine the number of traumatic and repetitive injuries an animal can suffer, as well as, the normal wear and tear. Many of the problems that our animal companions show can be attributed to the vertebral subluxations that can impede the flow of their vital energy through the spinal cord and nerves. These subluxations can cause constant pain, muscle spasms and organ problems. We all know how stress can contribute to our ill health and chiropractic problems. We tend to forget that our pets often take on a great deal of our problems and stress, as well as their own. When we have a bad day at work or with the kids, we have less time and tolerance for our pets and they definitely can sense our tension and unhappiness. This is why it is helpful for the owner to be under chiropractic care so they can be in balance and place less of a burden on their ill pet.

Herbs

Herbal therapy is probably one of our better known al-

ternative therapies. The two main branches involve TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine-Eastern Herbs) and Western Herbs. We all are familiar with the benefits or reputation of some herbs. Chamomile in tea is calming, garlic can help fight colds, eucalyptus for a stuffy nose or in our vaporizers. These are just some of the thousands of herbal treatments that have been passed down from the ancient healers. Herbs can affect the body in many ways and should be used cautiously and with the advice of someone familiar with both their good and bad effects. Many TCM trained veterinarians include herbology as one of their main modalities in conjunction with acupuncture.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy is the treatment of disease with minute quantities of substances to trigger the body's intelligence to fight that disease on its own. Homeopathic physicians have discovered, over the centuries that the body can recognize microscopic amounts of different materials. These materials or "remedies" are matched to the symptoms and can have remarkable effects. True homeopathy is a very pure science and is practiced on animals by veterinarians trained in the classical approach. It is one of the most powerful of the alternative therapies and has successfully treated everything from fears to cancer. It also affects the body's vital force and helps balance and adjust it. It is important to have a consultation with someone trained in this discipline to realize the full benefit of homeopathic treatment. Next time we will delve more deeply into Homeopathy and the negative effects of suppressing a body's natural reactions and how homeopathic therapy can help to balance the Life Force and reduce our need for more harmful medications.

In Conclusion

Many of the alternative forms of medicine were actually the main types of medicine until recent times. They were practiced by medicine men, wise women and healers for many thousands of years and have only recently become "alternatives"

Remember that holistic really means WHOLE and that your pet care should include all aspects of your pet's life. It should include good natural nutrition, close observation, attention, love, consideration and proper medical care. That medical care need not be limited to the alternative and may need to include conventional at appropriate times. The point is to make that your last choice rather than your first choice and to always practice moderation to avoid or minimize suppression. We will explore this idea next issue when we discuss the differences between Palliation, Suppression and Cure. 🐾

*Larry A. Bernstein, VMD, CVA, CVH, PHom.
Natural Holistic Health Care
<http://www.naturalholistic.com>*

