

About Veterinary Naturopathy

Principles of Veterinary Naturopathy

Veterinary Naturopathy is based on six principles

The Healing Power of Nature (vix medicatrix naturae) The body has the inherent ability to heal itself. This healing process is intelligent and ordered. Veterinary naturopathy support and assist the healing process by identifying and removing obstacles to a cure, and by using natural methods and medicines that work with, not against, the body's natural processes.

Identify and Address the Cause (tolle causum) Every illness has a cause. Causes may occur on the physical, mental or emotional level. Symptoms are expressions of the body's attempt to heal, but are not the cause of illness. Veterinary naturopathic practitioners are trained to find and remove the underlying cause of an illness rather than just eliminate or suppress symptoms.

First Do No Harm (primum non nocere) Veterinary Naturopaths use methods that minimize the risk of harmful side effects. Methods designed to suppress symptoms but not remove the underlying cause may be harmful, their use is always avoided.

Doctor as Teacher (docere) The original meaning of the word "doctor" is teacher. A principal objective of veterinary naturopathy is to educate the client and emphasize responsibility for their animal's health.

Veterinary (merriam-webster date 1790) of, relating to, practicing, or being the science and art of prevention, cure or alleviation of disease and injury in animals, especially domestic animals.

Target the Whole Animal When evaluating an animal; all aspects of that animal (physical, mental and emotional) are taken into account.

Prevention is the Best Cure Illness is often due to diet, habits, and general lifestyle. Veterinary Naturopaths assess risk factors and susceptibility to disease and make appropriate recommendations to prevent health challenges, or to prevent existing health challenges from developing into more serious or chronic states. The emphasis is on building health rather than treating disease.

What conditions do veterinary naturopaths address?

Veterinary naturopaths address most all conditions and health challenges. Veterinary naturopathy can be used alone or in conjunction with other alternative methods or conventional veterinary medicine.

What methods do veterinary naturopaths use?

Nutritional Medicine: In 420 BC, Hippocrates, the father of medicine, said, "Leave your drugs in the chemists pot if you can cure the patient with food." Many of the chronic health problems that plague our animal's today are the result of poor dietary and lifestyle choices by their owners. Illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and gastrointestinal problems develop as a consequence of the food we choose for our animals. By changing their diet and encouraging a healthy lifestyle, we can often change or reverse the course of an illness and restore health. Naturopathic doctors are trained in assessing nutritional status and recommending dietary changes and vitamin and mineral supplementation.

Botanical Medicine: Botanical medicine (phytotherapy) has been used for thousands of years. Current scientific studies have validated the use of many plants as medicines. Today, 80% of the world's population uses plants to treat illness. Plants are used medicinally because they do not have high toxicity, accumulate in the body, or cause addiction or withdrawal symptoms. Herbs are used to enhance immune function; improve digestion; normalize bodily functions; destroy bacteria, viruses, and fungi; soothe irritated tissues; calm nerves; and relax muscles.

Aromatherapy: Aromatherapy the therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils which contain active agents that promote physical and psychological well-being. Aromatherapy offers diverse physical and psychological benefits depending on the essential oil or oil combination used and the method of application. As early as 1500 B.C. the ancient Egyptians used botanical oils, waters and resins for healing and religious ceremonies.

Bach Flower Essences: Bach Flowers refer to the study of the work of Edwin Bach, M.D. and his research into flower remedies. Bach believed that there was an emotional component to most disease processes. His non-invasive approach discovered in the 20th century has many adherents around the world today. Dr Bach believed that the body would respond with healing by correcting the emotional component of disease. His research led him to codify certain substances that facilitate this process.

Homeopathy: In the 18th century, Dr. Samuel Hahneman discovered that substances that cause specific symptoms in large doses could cure those same symptoms in infinitesimal doses. For example, when a healthy individual is given quinine in large doses, it produces symptoms of malaria. Yet, when very small doses of quinine are given to an individual with malaria, it helps ease the symptoms. This is known as the "Law of Similars". Homeopathic medicines, known as remedies, are produced from animals, plants, and minerals. The veterinary naturopathic doctors formulate remedies based on an animal's unique symptoms or characteristics. This means that two animal's who have the same health problem may receive different remedies because their symptoms are different. It requires training and skill to determine the appropriate remedy. When the appropriate remedy (called the similimum) is given, it

can produce powerful and effective results. Homeopathy is used to address all forms of acute and chronic illness.

Hydrotherapy: Hydrotherapy, or water therapy, is the application of water to initiate cure. It is a safe and painless therapy that can be done at home for all types of injury and illness.

Acupressure: Acupressure is a type of bodywork that involves pressing specific points on the body with the fingers, knuckles and palms to relieve pain, reduce stress and promote general good health. Developed in China some 5,000 years ago, perhaps out of the natural human instinct to hold or rub a place on the body that hurts, acupressure is part of the holistic system of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) that also includes acupuncture. (Interestingly, the use of acupressure predates acupuncture by some 2,500 years.

Therapeutic Massage: Massage is the manipulation of the soft tissues of the body. It helps ease stress and muscular tension, relieve pain from injuries and speed healing from certain acute and chronic conditions.

Iridology: One of the tools many naturopathic veterinarians use in determining the health of an animal is iridology. Different parts of the iris form a map for the body's parts. So, if there is distortion or discoloration in a certain part of the iris, it can be an indication that the corresponding part of the body is not in good health. Iridology is also used to ascertain an animal's susceptibility to genetic disease, and some forms of iridology work with a model that sees four generations back through the eye. The left eye represents the mother's side of the family and the right eye the father's side. Part of the role of naturopathy is to make a person aware of their animal's genetic weakness, so they can live in a way, which maintains their optimum health, rather than triggering disease.

What can I expect during my first consultation with a veterinary naturopath?

Once the animal's history has been taken, the veterinary naturopath may do various screenings supplemented by in-depth questions to the owner. After the intake and evaluation are completed, the veterinary naturopath will discuss a health plan or protocol in relation to the animal. If needed, the animal will be referred for laboratory or other tests, or to a specialist practitioner for further consultation.

Follow-up visits are scheduled from one to four weeks after any regimen has begun. If a chronic illness is being addressed, the owner can expect their animal to undergo at least one month of therapy for every year the illness has resided.

When can I expect results?

Neither veterinary naturopathy, nor any other form of healthcare, offers the miraculous, although most report very rapid results. Truly great results come from positive behavior changes and the persistence it requires to maintain these changes long enough for the body to respond. The veterinary naturopath is attempting to stimulate and support the animal's own system to address the imbalance(s) that have damaged their health. Often, long-term underlying disturbances such as nutritional deficiencies or excesses, rather than the actual presenting health problem, must be corrected in order to allow the body to realign its natural state of optimal health.

Why should I use a naturopathic veterinarian?

Veterinary naturopaths can target a wide variety of conditions without the use of drugs and surgery, this is the primary reason clients choose to use them. Some clients want to integrate their animal's medical treatment with naturopathic modalities to receive the best that both practices have to offer. Some clients see them because their animal has a health problem that has not been helped by conventional means. The goal is to identify and eliminate the cause of the health challenge, rather than suppressing the symptoms of the health challenge. The goal of a veterinary naturopath is to help the animal feel better without causing harm or uncomfortable side effects.

Veterinary naturopaths have extensive training in species specific nutrition, nutritional supplements and the safe use of alternative therapies. They are also trained in the interactions between natural medicines and pharmaceuticals. The veterinary naturopath rejects the utilization of drugs and surgical intervention and instead investigates health challenges with natural therapies. A veterinary naturopath respects the expression of symptoms as the body's attempt to heal itself and knows that symptoms are not the disease or the cause of dis-ease. The veterinary naturopath identifies the underlying condition and uses supportive therapies to assist the body in its recovery to health. A veterinary naturopath takes into account the complex interaction of physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, and social factors when assessing an animal. Veterinary naturopaths have been trained in, and possess the ability to, determine the underlying cause of the illness and to stimulate the body's own healing ability, which is why veterinary naturopathy can be so effective where other systems fail.

Veterinary naturopathy is not a fad; it is a natural approach to health, wellness, and healing. It recognizes the animal body as an interrelation of the body's systems and it is part of a tradition of medicine that emphasizes finding and eliminating the causative agent of disease and supporting the body's natural ability to heal. Veterinary naturopathy, its philosophy and components have been around as long as people and animals have, but until recently, have been overlooked in general health care. It is now once again gaining popularity as a primary healthcare system, just as it was for many hundreds of years. Used as a primary healthcare system, veterinary naturopathy subscribes to natural substances and modalities that enhance the healing power of the body. Dis-ease may be multifaceted, but there are components of veterinary naturopathy that go beyond the

conventional prescriptions and surgery that comprehensively provide successful amelioration.

The body is a natural wonder and an efficient machine. In that mechanistic sense, it needs the appropriate care and fuel or it cannot function properly. Maintaining health is not complicated and it doesn't need to be expensive. When you think of all the encompassing factors of maintaining health, modern allopathic approaches are much more costly and have typically produced fewer results, both long-term and short-term. Veterinary naturopathy will help, aid and assist your animal's body in building, repairing and maintaining health, thereby eliminating more common and frequent visits to their healthcare practitioner because less manifestations are realized.

Veterinary naturopathy focuses on building health rather than fighting disease. Let your animal enjoy health and protect it by utilizing a veterinary naturopath in the future.