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The Whole



Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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Fostering Experience

Where will Ivy take root?

BY NANCY KERNS

I wander through my local animal shelters fairly often. Usually I'm looking for a dog of a certain description to photograph for an article. (Sadly, dogs with illustrative health or behavior problems can often be found in a shelter.) I also go to the shelters following our reviews of foods, treats, toys, and dog care products, to donate the leftover booty. I'm often tempted to bring dogs home.

For years, my motivation to steel my heart against this temptation was my old Border Collie, Rupert. He didn't appreciate the company of other dogs, and it just didn't seem fair to foist a permanent housemate on the old guy. But Rupe's been gone a year this Christmas.

I still have Mokie, the Long-Haired Chihuahua who came for a summer visit and stayed. After a lifetime of big, hairy dogs, it's been nice having just one tiny (hairy) dog. Small dog, small dog food budget, small poop. Even his bad behavior is no big deal!

But it was inevitable that I would see a face I couldn't resist. Let me quickly add – I'm just fostering this pup! She's not staying!

I was looking for a puppy to photograph for one of our sister publications when I saw her. Being black, she wasn't of much use to me (black dogs are famously difficult to photograph), but she sure was sweet, pressing her shoulder and head against the bars of her cage in an effort to elicit some contact.



In case the shelter staff didn't already know, I called a volunteer over to look at the thick goop coming out of the puppy's nose; she was miserable with kennel cough. "Yup, I know,"

said the volunteer. "And if I don't get her into a foster home quick, that's going to be the end of her. . ." All my resistance crumbled. "Oh gosh, I'll take her," I found myself saying.

(I have to add that I had recently heard an immunologist discuss how low a risk kennel cough presents to healthy adult dogs who live in homes. And Mokie has been fine.)

I'll keep Ivy (as we've dubbed her) for a couple of weeks, until her cold is gone and she receives another puppy vaccine and is spayed. By then, she'll be housetrained, crate-trained, pretty well socialized, and know the basics – sit, down, wait, off. She'll be far more adoptable at that point. Then I'll help the rescue group who oversees the fostering from that shelter find her a "forever home." Any dog who lives here has to model for the magazine; how can I keep a dog I can't photograph?

In the meantime, the timing of Ivy's arrival has been fortuitous. Samples of aromatherapy products (for CJ Puotinen's article on page 8) were arriving from all over, including some terrific immune-stimulating formulas perfect for a puppy with a cough. I picked up a few tips as I edited Mardi Richmond's article on housetraining (page 12) to help with that process. I used canned food (from my review on page 3) to help convince her that the crate was a good place. And when she lost four of her front baby teeth chewing on a cardboard box in my office, I was able to use Dr. Randy Kidd's article on the mouth

(page 15) to pinpoint her age at 13 weeks. And, just in case, I've been trying to improve my photography skills (see page 20).

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MISSION STATEMENT: WDJ's mission is to provide dog guardians with in-depth information on effective holistic healthcare methods and successful nonviolent training. The methods we discuss will endeavor to do no harm to dogs; we do not advocate perpetrating even minor transgressions in the name of "greater good." We intend our articles to enable readers to immediately apply training and healthcare techniques to their own dogs with visible and enjoyable success. All topics should contribute to improving the dog's health and vitality, and deepening the canine/human bond. Above all, we wish to contribute information that will enable consumers to make kind, healthy, and informed decisions about caring for their own dogs.

The Whole Dog Journal

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Can? Do!

The best canned dog foods offer myriad benefits for your dogs.

BY NANCY KERNS

Selling the entire concept of canned food to diehard kibble fans is an uphill battle. “It’s expensive,” dog owners frequently complain. “It smells bad. It’s not very convenient. It has to be kept in the refrigerator once it’s opened. When you have big dogs, you have to open too many cans to make a meal!”

These may be valid points. But have you ever noticed how dogs are *crazy* for the stuff?

It’s possible that dogs like canned food simply because it smells strong. But it may also have something to do with the fact that canned dog foods usually contain much more meat – sometimes twice as much or even more – than dry dog foods.

Canned foods also retain their nutritional

value better than dry foods. Further, the nutrients contained in the food ingredients suffer less damage in the cooking process than the nutrients in the ingredients of kibble. (Note that vitamin/mineral mixes are added to *all* commercial foods, to ensure the finished products contain minimum levels of a range of nutrients needed by dogs – the canine equivalent of the “recommended daily amount.”)

The amount of protein and fat in a food before and after it is canned are virtually unchanged. Neither does the canning process affect most vitamins. It has been said that vegetables can lose more vitamins by lying in a refrigerator for a week than in the canning process.

Canned foods usually contain far fewer chemical additives than dry foods, if any at all. It would be wasteful to use artificial flavors in canned products; because of the

moist, fragrant nature of the meat-based contents, artificial flavoring and other palatants are not needed to entice dogs.

To destroy any possible bacterial contaminants, cans are subjected to heat processing after they have been sealed. This obviates the need for preservatives to keep the food from spoiling. (This does not mean the foods are entirely free of preservatives; some ingredients have preservatives added to them before they arrive at the pet food plant. As long as the maker does not *add* preservatives, this “hidden” ingredient does not have to be declared on the food label.)

Thanks to the oxygen-free environment, canned food is prevented from degrading for at least several years. Note that because they lack added preservatives, canned food *must* be kept refrigerated after opening, and, like fresh meat or poultry, is best consumed within a day or two.

The Whole  Dog Journal™

WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

- If your dog needs to lose weight, you can use canned foods as part of his ration to help him feel full faster. Look for low-fat varieties, however.
- Consider feeding canned foods if your dog is at risk for, or is suffering from any sort of cystitis or kidney disease.
- Buy products that list a whole meat product first on the ingredients panel.
- Look for products that contain whole meats, vegetables, and grains (if any).
- Expect to pay for quality. Top-quality food is not inexpensive.



The line of really good canned dog foods gets longer every day as mainstream pet food makers explore the top end of the market, and those who have years of experience making these foods expand their lines. Our dogs are the winners in the competition.

It's the water

The most obvious difference between canned and dry dog foods is the moisture (water) content. Most canned foods contain about 78 percent moisture; one we know of contains 88 percent moisture.

Canned dog foods contain so much water for two reasons. The most important one is because water helps facilitate the production process; without added water, the mixed ingredients would be too thick to flow through the mixing and filling machines in the manufacturing process. (This is why water is often described on the list of ingre-

dients of many canned foods as “water sufficient for processing.”)

By the way, eating a food that is so high in moisture is helpful for dogs with cystitis or kidney disease. The high moisture content can also help a dog who is on a diet feel full faster.

Moisture-laden ingredients such as fresh vegetables and, especially, fresh or frozen meats are most efficiently used in canned foods. In the production of *dry* food, moisture has to be removed from these ingredients, which uses energy and costs money. Because water-filled ingredients can

be used so efficiently in wet foods, they *are*. This is another reason canned foods, even lower quality examples, tend to contain more fresh or frozen meat and fresh vegetables than their dry counterparts.

When a mix of good quality, fresh or frozen animal products are used in a canned food, the resulting food will often contain the amounts of protein (and range of constituent amino acids) and fat required by law; all that is needed to make it “complete and balanced” is a vitamin/mineral supplement, and sometimes some ingredients to correct the calcium-

“Extra Credit”: Features We Don't Require, But Really Admire

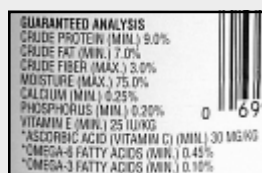
We can't, in good conscience, say that the following points are required attributes of a top-quality food. We are familiar with some pretty darned good products that don't offer any of the following. But we can wish they did . . .

- **We really appreciate it when the date-code or production code is easy to find, read, and interpret.** Each canned food manufacturer has a unique coding system, usually imprinted on the top or bottom of the can. Some list a product's time of day, day, month, and year of production; some companies reference only the year. More assiduous companies may reference the specific plant or even the line in a plant. The codes help the company research any problems that may arise once the food is sold and/or consumed. But if they are easy to interpret, they can also help a consumer identify fresher products on the shelf. Ideally, both the date of manufacture *and* the product's expiration date are listed and easy to determine.

- **The more items listed on a product label's “guaranteed analysis” (GA), the better.** Federal and state laws require each pet food product to list four things on the label: The minimum level of crude protein, the minimum level of crude fat, the maximum level of crude fiber, and the maximum level of moisture. These “guarantees” are subject to testing and enforcement; if a state feed control official tests a food and finds it does *not* contain as much protein as its GA says it does, the state may slap a “stop sale” order on that food in that state, and even fine the manufacturer.

Those four things are all that is *required* to be listed in the GA. But a manufacturer can list anything else in the GA that he is willing to guarantee – knowing that these additional items, while voluntary, are also subject to testing and enforcement.

Perhaps the best way, then, to prove that a food contains as much of a certain nutrient as it says it does, is to list that nutrient on the GA. Do a company's marketing materials boast about the benefits of the chondroitin, Omega-3 and -6 fatty acids, and/or additional vitamin C or E they've included in their food? If the amounts in the food are really at high enough levels so as to offer some therapeutic purpose, we'd expect to see it in the GA.



GUARANTEED ANALYSIS	
CRUDE PROTEIN (MIN.)	9.0%
CRUDE FAT (MIN.)	7.0%
CRUDE FIBER (MAX.)	3.0%
MOISTURE (MAX.)	75.0%
CALCIUM (MIN.)	0.25%
PHOSPHORUS (MIN.)	0.20%
VITAMIN E (MIN.)	25 IU/KG
ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C) (MIN.)	30 MG/KG
OMEGA-6 FATTY ACIDS (MIN.)	0.45%
OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS (MIN.)	0.10%

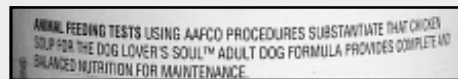
- **We like to see the caloric content of the food listed on the label.** This is a topic of some dispute in the pet food industry. Like people, dogs of varying age, activity levels, size, body type, and environment have varying energy needs. A “suggested feeding amount” can't address every dog; owners *must* have a picture of their dog's ideal body condition, and adjust the dog's rations accordingly to help the dog gain or lose weight, and then maintain that ideal. That said, comparing foods' caloric content, along with the protein and fat content, helps educated owners select foods that are right for their dogs.



CALORIE CONTENT (CALCULATED)	
KCAL MEKG...	1222 / KCAL ME/13.2 OZ. CAN_452

- **We like it when *all* of the food maker's contact information is listed on its product labels (and their product literature, including Web sites, too).** Again, the law requires the label to state the location of the company whose name is on the food's label. But not all foods list a toll-free number that dog owners can call if they need to ask a question about the food. Some list only a Web site – not everyone is online! Some have Web sites that offer only e-mail addresses – no mailing addresses or phone numbers.

- **We feel better when a food has passed an AAFCO feeding trial.** A food may list one of two possible statements on its label: an indication that the food “is formulated to meet the nutritional levels” established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), or that “animal feeding trials using AAFCO procedures substantiate that (the food) provides complete and balanced nutrition.” Suffice to say for now that we think there is real value to conducting feeding trials. We discussed this in detail in “Who's in Charge?” December 2000, and we'll be discussing it again in a future issue exploring how and where these tests are done.



ANIMAL FEEDING TESTS USING AAFCO PROCEDURES SUBSTANTIATE THAT CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE DOG LOVER'S SOUL™ ADULT DOG FORMULA PROVIDES COMPLETE AND BALANCED NUTRITION FOR MAINTENANCE.
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- **We appreciate organic ingredients.** Dogs are exposed to far more chemicals than is healthy, so cutting out chemical pesticides or fertilizers in *any* portion of their diet is a brilliant idea – and better for the planet, too.



phosphorus ratio. Whereas with dry foods, the manufacturing equipment can't tolerate mixtures that contain more than 50 percent meat, canned foods may contain as much as 95 percent meat.

Further, meat – and by this we mean all animal proteins, including poultry, pork, fish, lamb, and beef – is *the* most palatable ingredient that pet food makers have at their disposal. Funny how dogs like what's good for them.

WDJ's selection criteria

Like every type of dog food, only a small percentage of canned products are of the utmost quality. The bulk of the market pursues high-volume sales of low-cost foods. Only a few manufacturers have trained their sights on the top end of the market, where dog owners expect only the best ingredients and utmost performance from the food – healthy, happy companion dogs; show dogs with great coats, teeth, and eyes; breeding dogs with perfect production records.

There is no legal definition of a “premium” or “super-premium” food, so what it means when manufacturers describe their products with those words is anybody's guess. Some justify the appellation with the explanation that their products are extremely high in protein or fat. However, a high protein and fat content does *not* make a food “better.” You can definitely feed a dog too much of either one.

Here's how *we* determine whether a canned food is truly “premium.” The following is our selection criteria for a top-quality product:

- We eliminate all foods containing artificial colors, flavors, or added preservatives.
- We reject foods containing fat or protein not identified by species. “Animal fat” and “meat proteins” are euphemisms for low-quality, low-priced mixed ingredients of uncertain origin.
- We reject any food containing meat by-products or poultry by-products. There is a wide variation in the quality of the by-products that are available to dog food producers. And there is no way for the average dog owner (or us, for that matter) to find out, beyond a shadow of a doubt, whether the by-products used are carefully handled, chilled, and used fresh within a day or two of slaughter (as some companies have told us), or the cheapest, lowest-quality material found on the market. There is some,

Ask Them to Prove It!

Last year, we tried something new. We asked most (not all; we accidentally omitted a few) of the companies on our past “Top Food” lists to provide us with documents that could substantiate claims they made about the quality of their ingredients.

The exercise was a paperwork nightmare, for us *and* for them, and not one we're eager to repeat. With just a couple of exceptions, all the companies we surveyed were able to provide documentation that legitimized their claims.

The experiment was far from a waste of time, however. It put the companies – who all target the very top end of the market – on notice that consumers (and we count ourselves among them) may require more than just marketing claims before they believe in and buy a product. Representatives from numerous companies complained (mostly good-naturedly) to us that, following our food reviews, they received *lots* of calls from consumers asking for proof of their ingredient claims.

As far as we're concerned, mission accomplished. The manufacturers now understand that if *they* can't (or choose not to) provide proof of their marketing claims, dog owners can and will get that information – and sales – from other premium pet food makers.

but *much less* variation in the quality of whole-meat products; they are too expensive to be handled carelessly.

- We eliminate any food containing sugar or other sweetener. A food containing quality meats shouldn't need additional palatants to entice dogs.
- We look for foods with whole meat, fish, or poultry as the *first* ingredient on the food labels. Ingredients are listed on the label by the total weight they contribute to the product. Fresh or frozen whole meats contain lots of water, but in lower-quality products, water may be the first ingredient. (We know of *one* exception to this rule: Spot's Stew, whose ingredient list starts with water and contains a whopping 90 percent moisture. However, the other ingredients appear to be top-drawer. As the name suggests, the food is formulated this way so as to emulate a stew, rather than a canned meat loaf.)
- We like it when a nutritious meat, poultry, or fish broth is used in place of water. Broth is obtained by cooking meat, fish, or poultry bones, part, and/or muscle tissue, and must be at least 95 percent moisture.
- If grains or vegetables are used, we look for the use of *whole* grains and vegetables, rather than a series of reconstituted parts, i.e., “rice,” rather than “rice flour, rice bran, brewer's rice,” etc.
- Speaking of grain . . . We've discussed this many times, but there is nothing that says a canned food has to contain *any* grain.

Grains are less expensive, and have lower-quality amino acid profiles than meat and poultry. And, unlike humans, dogs do *not* need carbohydrates to live; they can do fine with just protein and fat. We prefer foods with small amounts of grain (or none).

Go compare

On the following pages, we've listed a number of canned dog foods that meet our selection criteria. It's vitally important that you understand the following points regarding these foods:

- *The foods on our list are not the only good foods on the market.*
- *Any food that you find that meets our selection criteria, outlined above, is just as good as any of the foods on our list.*
- *We have presented the foods on our list alphabetically. We do not “rank order” foods. We don't attempt to identify which ones are “best,” because what's “best” for every dog is different.*

Given the above criteria – and perhaps taking some of our “Extra Credit” criteria into account – you can now go analyze *your* dog's food. We encourage you to choose a food for your dog based on quality, yes, but also in accordance with what works best for you and your dog in terms of types of ingredients and levels of protein and fat, as well as local availability and price. Our list of “Top Canned Dog Foods” is offered as a starting place, and for its value as a comparison to other products you may find.

WDJ'S APPROVED "TOP CANNED FOODS"

MAKER, CONTACT INFO	VARIETY, FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS, % PROTEIN, FAT, FIBER, MOISTURE. NOTES	MAKER, CONTACT INFO	VARIETY, FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS, % PROTEIN, FAT, FIBER, MOISTURE. NOTES
ACTIVE LIFE Active Life Pet Products Boulder, CO (877) 291-2913 activelifep.com	"Whole Ocean Fish Fricassee": Ocean fish, broth, guar gum, lecithin, potassium chloride... 8.0%; 7.0%; 1.5%; 80% First product of its kind on the market – a very unusual presentation of whole chunks of fish, including soft, edible bones. Terrific quality.	DRS. FOSTER & SMITH Drs. Foster & Smith Rhinelander, WI (800) 826-7206 drsfostersmith.com	"Lamb and Brown Rice": Lamb, lamb liver, lamb broth, brown rice, herring... 9.0%; 7.0%; 1.0%; 78% We appreciate that the maker also includes (on its Web site) nutrient amounts on a "dry matter basis for easy comparison to its dry foods.
ADVANCED PET DIETS Breeder's Choice Pet Foods Irwindale, CA (800) 255-4AVO breeders-choice.com	"APD Maintenance": Chicken, chicken broth, rice, chicken liver, lamb... 8.0%; 4.0%; 1.5%; 78% Breeder's choice is a family-owned company with several lines of superior foods, and some lower-cost products. We like this line.	EAGLE PACK HOLISTIC SELECT Eagle Pet Products, Inc. Mishawaka, IN (800) 255-5959 eaglepack.com	"Chicken": Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, ocean fish, oat bran... 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.5%; 78% This line now has six varieties in it, all good-looking products. The newest is a tuna, salmon, and shrimp variety with chicken liver.
ARTEMIS Artemis Pet Foods Canoga Park, CA (800) 282-5876 artemispetfood.com	"Beef Formula": Beef, beef broth, liver, ocean fish, oat bran... 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.5%; 78% This company, a newer player in the market, seems best positioned to market pet food to Asia; products are not widely available in U.S.	EVOLVE Triumph Pet Industries, Inc. Warwick, NY (800) 331-5144 evolvepet.com	"Pheasant and Potatoes": Pheasant, pheasant broth, potatoes, chicken, sunflower oil... 8.0%; 6.0%; 1.5%; 78% Very interesting formulas in this line, including veal, duck, chicken, lamb, chicken and pasta (not our favorite), and turkey varieties.
AVO-DERM Breeder's Choice Pet Foods Irwindale, CA (800) 255-4AVO breeders-choice.com	"Chicken and Rice Adult": Chicken, chicken broth, rice, chicken liver, ocean fish... 8.0%; 7.0%; 1.5%; 78% Another line of good products from Breeder's Choice.	EVANGER'S FOR DOGS Evanger's Dog and Cat Food Co., Inc. Wheeling, IL (800) 288-6796 evangersdogfood.com	"Duck and Sweet Potato Dinner": Duck, water, sweet potatoes, vitamin A acetate, vitamin D3... 9.0%; 4%; 1.5%; 78% As we said in the text, when a canned food's ingredients are top-notch, you don't need much more than the protein source and the vitamin/mineral supplement to make it "complete."
AZMIRA Azmira Holistic Animal Care Tucson, AZ (800) 497-5665 azmira.com	"Beef and Chicken": Beef, beef broth, chicken, chicken liver, kidney... 10.0%; 5.0%; 1.0%; 78% Azmira says the product is made in a (human) kosher fish cannery. It also says its diets are among the highest in essential fatty acids.	INNOVA Natura Pet Products Santa Clara, CA (800) 532-7261 naturapet.com	Turkey, chicken, water, potatoes, brown rice... 9.0%; 8.5%; 1.5%; 74% Also available in a senior variety with lower protein and fat, more fiber. Natura also lists fatty acids and vitamin E amounts in its Guaranteed Analysis (GA).
BOULDER CREEK FARMS Active Life Pet Products Boulder, CO (877) 291-2913 activelifep.com	"Ground Beef": Beef, beef broth, chicken liver, ocean fish, potatoes... 8.0%; 6.0%; 1.5%; 78% Maker says beef used is hormone-free.	LAMADERM Natural Life Pet Products Girard, KS (800) 367-2391 nlpp.com	Lamb broth, lamb, lamb liver, brown rice, rice... 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.5%; 78% Note that the water ingredient is first, and two types of rice are listed. This does not contain as much meat as some of the other products here.
CALIFORNIA NATURAL Natura Pet Products Santa Clara, CA (800) 532-7261 naturapet.com	"Lamb and Rice": Lamb, water, brown rice, rice, sunflower oil... 9.0%; 6.0%; 1.5%; 74% Very simple, clean ingredients list. Company plans to release a chicken and rice variety in 2005.	MERRICK Merrick Pet Care Hereford, TX (800) 664-7387 merrickpetcare.com	"Thanksgiving Day Dinner": Turkey, turkey broth, turkey liver, sweet potatoes, carrots... 9.0%; 4.0%; 1.0%; 81% Merrick offers a large line (10 varieties with several more planned for 2005) of innovative and appealing formulas.
CANIDAE Canidae Corporation San Luis Obispo, CA (800) 398-1600 canidae.com	"Chicken, Lamb, and Fish": Chicken, chicken broth, lamb, chicken liver, ocean fish... 9.0%; 6.0%; 1.5%; 78% Omega 6 and Omega 3 levels also on its Guaranteed Analysis (GA).	NATURAL BALANCE Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance Pacoima, CA (800) 829-4493 naturalbalanceinc.com	"Chicken Formula": Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, carrots, oat bran... 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.5%; 78% Another good-sized line (five varieties) of high-quality foods with an appealing list of ingredients.



MAKER, CONTACT INFO	VARIETY, FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS, % PROTEIN, FAT, FIBER, MOISTURE. NOTES
NATURAL LIFE Natural Life Pet Products Girard, KS (800) 367-2391 nlpp.com	"Adult" : Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, brown rice, pearled barley . . . 8.0%; 4.0%; 1.5%; 78% This is an example of how a company's canned products are often more compelling than its dry foods (which we're not wild about).


NEURA MEATS Old Mother Hubbard Lowell, MA (800) 225-0904 oldmotherhubbard.com	"95% Beef" : Beef, beef broth, brown rice, guar and carrageenan gums (thickeners), ground flaxseed . . . 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.0%; 78% We really appreciate this line (a whopping 13 varieties) of simple, meat-rich formulas.
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NEWMAN'S OWN ORGANICS Newman's Own Organics Aptos, CA (800) 865-2866 newmansownorganics.com	"Chicken" : Organic chicken, water, salmon, ocean whitefish, brown rice . . . 9.0%; 6.0%; 1.0%; 78% We LOVE the use of organic chicken in this and the other Newman's Own canned food, "Chicken and Brown Rice."
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NUTRO NATURAL CHOICE ULTRA Nutro Products Inc. City of Industry, CA (800) 833-5330 nutroproducts.com	"Adult" : Chicken broth, chicken, lamb liver, chicken liver, food starch . . . 8.5%; 75%; 1.0%; 78% <i>Some great (and some not great) stuff in the ingredients (which start with water). But the GA features an astounding 14 additional nutrients that Nutro guarantees, including vitamins E and C, glucosamine and chondroitin, fatty acids, beta-carotene, and several amino acids.</i>
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PETGUARD ORGANIC PetGuard Green Cove Springs, FL (800) 874-3221 petguard.com	"Organic Chicken and Vegetable Entree" : Organic chicken, chicken broth, organic brown rice, organic oats, organic carrots . . . 8.0%; 7.0%; 1.0%; 78% We were waiting for someone to make a canned food with this many organic ingredients . . .
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PINNACLE Breeder's Choice Pet Foods Irwindale, CA (800) 255-4286 breeders-choice.com	"Trout and Sweet Potato" : Trout, fish broth, herring, oatmeal, oat bran . . . 8.5%; 75%; 3.0%; 74% This is a new addition; Pinnacle's other canned variety is a chicken and vegetable formula. We like them both, but the ingredients in this one are novel enough to consider it as a candidate in a "food elimination diet for allergic dogs."
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PRAIRIE Nature's Variety Lincoln, NE (888) 519-7387 naturessvariety.com	 "Beef" : Beef, beef broth, beef liver, carrots, peas . . . 9.0%; 7.0%; 3.0%; 75% Another line (six products) of nice formulas, with three based on novel ingredients – rabbit, duck, and venison.
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PRECISE PLUS Precise Pet Products Nacogdoches, TX (888) 4precise precisepet.com	"Foundation Formula Adult" : Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, ocean fish, carrots . . . 7.0%; 4.0%; 2.0%; 78% Superior quality control and consistency.
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MAKER, CONTACT INFO	VARIETY, FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS, % PROTEIN, FAT, FIBER, MOISTURE. NOTES
SENSIBLE CHOICE Royal Canin USA, Inc. St. Peters, MO (800) 592-6687 (US); (800) 527-2673 (Can) sensiblechoice.com	"Turkey and Rice Adult" : Turkey, water, turkey liver, brewer's rice, guar gum . . . 8.0%; 5.0%; 2.0%; 76% This line does not include any inspired formulas, but it is more affordable than many, and better than some with bigger names. Calcium and phosphorus amounts are listed on the GA.

SOLID GOLD Solid Gold Health Products for Pets, Inc. El Cajon, CA (800) 364-4863 solidgoldhealth.com	"Turkey, Ocean Fish, Sweet Potatoes, and Carrots" : Turkey, turkey broth, turkey liver, ocean fish, carrots . . . 9.0%; 5.0%; 1.5%; 78% One of three really attractive canned formulas from a unique company.
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SPOT'S STEW Halo, Purely for Pets Palm Harbor, FL (800) 426-4256 halopets.com	"Original Recipe" : Water, chicken, carrots, celery, yellow squash . . . 3.5%; 1.5%; 1.5%; 88% Most of the other products here are "loaf" type foods; this one, as the name implies, really is a stew or soup. Great ingredients in a lot of water.
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TRIUMPH Triumph Pet Industries, Inc. Warwick, NY (800) 331-5144 triumphpet.com	"Chicken, Rice 'n Vegetable" : Chicken, chicken liver, water, brown rice, carrots . . . 9.0%; 6.0%; 1.0%; 78% Another larger pet company with decent foods, better than some bigger-name products. Ash is listed in its GA (at 2.0% max). We like it when this is listed, and will discuss why in the future.
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VERUS VerUS Pet Foods, Inc. Abingdon, MD (888) 828-3787 veruspetfoods.com	"Chicken and Rice" : Chicken, chicken broth, brown rice, barley, calcium phosphate . . . 8.0%; 5.0%; 2.0%; 74% See how high up the vitamin/mineral supplements begin? That's due to an elegantly simple list of good ingredients.
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WELLNESS Old Mother Hubbard Lowell, MA (800) 225-0904 oldmotherhubbard.com	"Chicken and Sweet Potato" : Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, ocean whitefish, barley . . . 8.0%; 5.0%; 1.0%; 78% Another terrific line (eight products) with nice ingredients.
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WYSONG Wysong Corp. Midland, MI (989) 631-0009 wysong.net	"Maintenance" : Chicken, water, brown rice, corn, soybeans . . . 7.0%; 4.0%; 1.0%; 75% Meant to be fed as a supplement to and "top dressing" for Wysong's dry food. Wysong is fanatical about top-quality ingredients.
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COMPARE IF YOU DARE! Big-name products tend to contain by-products and grain fractions . . .	 Iams' "Adult Chicken and Rice" : Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, brewers rice, chicken by-product meal . . . Purina's "Alpo with Beef Prime Cuts in Gravy" : Water, poultry, beef, meat by-products, wheat flour, wheat gluten . . . Science Diet's "Adult Canine Maintenance Turkey" : Water, turkey, barley, meat by-products, corn meal . . .
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Smell This, You'll Feel Better

Yes, these products smell good. But the emphasis is on "therapy."

BY CJ PUOTINEN

Aromatherapy. Ten years ago, few people in the U.S. knew what it was, much less its canine applications. Today, hundreds of pet products contain essential oils or have "aromatherapy" on their labels. However, many people only associate aromatherapy with strongly scented candles or perfumed air sprays.

"That's recreational aromatherapy," says Kristen Leigh Bell, whose book *Holistic Aromatherapy for Animals* was published two years ago. "What Americans are just beginning to learn is that aromatherapy is actually a branch of medicine. In fact, in France, where the healing effects of essential oils were first documented, only licensed medical doctors can practice aromatherapy."

Aromatherapy utilizes essential oils and their byproducts, most of which are produced by the steam distillation of a plant's seeds, blossoms, fruit, leaves, stems, or roots. Ironically, while the term implies that fragrance plays an important role in the healing process, a plant's *aroma* has less to do with the therapeutic properties of its essential oil than the oil's small molecular size (which easily penetrates body tissues) and unique pharmacological properties.

There are essential oils with antibacte-

rial, antiviral, and/or antiseptic effects. Some have a calming influence; others are stimulating. There are essential oils that improve circulation, act as a diuretic, repel fleas and ticks, improve digestion, reduce inflammation, relieve congestion, elevate one's mood, stimulate hair growth, prevent motion sickness, enhance immunity, improve focus and concentration, speed wound healing, improve endocrine function, or facilitate detoxification – and, because the chemistry of plants is so complex, they may do several of these things at once. Truly, the emphasis in the term "aromatherapy" should be on "therapy."

Innovations in the field

Essential oils can be sprayed into the air, applied to a pet's bedding or clothing, or diluted and applied to the fur or skin. Because aromatherapy is such a complex subject, having experts design products for us is a time-saving convenience. Some large corporations make aromatherapy products for dogs, but the most interesting developments are coming from small manufacturers.

One is Cathy Franklin, a cosmetologist in Visalia, California, who came to aromatherapy by way of a perfume blending workshop. Her training included a year-long diploma course at the Michael Scholes School for Aromatic Studies, where she learned about canine applications for essential oils from Joan Clark, who was then Scholes' partner.

Cathy's Pet Potions line, which debuted in 2003 at the opening of a dog park, includes four mist products, a shampoo, a dry shampoo, and a conditioner. "The dogs loved them," says Franklin. "We couldn't keep them out of our booth. They kept jumping on the table and

The Whole  Dog Journal™

WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

- Ask your holistic veterinarian or groomer about aromatherapy products that may benefit your dog. Some vets use them in their holistic practices.
- Buy only those aromatherapy products that list all their ingredients, and that contain only natural essential oils.
- Consider grooming products that contain essential oils that offer therapeutic effects.

climbing under it."

Rather than use emulsifying agents, Franklin sells essential oil blends in small glass bottles accompanied by larger spray bottles. A dog owner puts an ounce of pure water in one of the large spray bottles, adds three to five drops of essential oil, and shakes the bottle before spritzing. "I want to keep the sprays as pure and organic as possible without adding anything that might cause irritation," says Franklin. "Another way to use the blends, which is what I prefer, is to place a drop or two on your hands and run your fingers through the dog's hair. This works very well, and it's ideal for dogs who don't like sprays or misters."

Franklin uses organic essential oils in all her products. "Essential oils are like fruits and vegetables in that their quality is graded, and I always buy the highest," she says.

Tara Fleming in Reedley, California, swears by Cathy's Pet Potions Relaxation Oil. "I use it on myself and my dogs before we compete," she says. "It helped relax my young German Shepherd at her first agility trial, and she finished her title in one day!"



The companies discussed in this article manufacture a variety of canine aromatherapy products that are pure and truly therapeutic.

Joan Clark, Franklin's teacher, became interested in aromatherapy for animals in 1990 when Mattie, her two-year-old Cocker Spaniel, became disabled. Clark had studied aromatherapy for humans in the 1980s with a series of internationally known instructors, including Marcel Lavabre, Michael Scholes, and Daniel Penoel. When Lavabre and Scholes went into business in California, Clark joined them, and for 13 years, trained students from around the world at the



Joan Clark makes products to help treat dogs' emotional and physical problems.

Michael Scholes School for Aromatic Studies. But it wasn't until her own dog suffered a serious injury that she considered adapting her knowledge for pets.

"A little kid sat on Mattie and broke her back," explains Clark. "The vet recommended that I put her down. Instead, for six months I slept on the floor with Mattie, massaged her, gave her flower essences, got her off pain medication, and carried her on walks so she could relieve herself and enjoy being outside. The time she seemed happiest was in a nearby park where she rolled in a bed of wild peppermint. One day when we came home from the park, I set her down and she stood on her own. That's when I began to appreciate the natural pain

relievers in peppermint, and it was the start of Mattie's dramatic recovery."

For Mattie, Clark blended peppermint essential oil with jojoba and other ingredients in a massage oil; this later became Clark's first canine product. Mattie lived to be 14, and was lively and active to the end.

Today, Clark runs Palais Aromaetica, an herb and aromatherapy business in Lawrence, Kansas, with over 40 products in its Pet

Aromaetica line. Clark says she uses plants and essential oils that help correct common imbalances such as problems with the immune system, arthritis, allergies, hot spots, fleas, and ticks, or emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, or a lack of mental focus. She also offers nontoxic products for cleaning everything in the house, including pet bedding, plus products for tooth cleaning and grooming. "We try to address every aspect of the animal's life. It's a holistic apothecary approach," she says.

Pay for quality

Faith Thanas is another experienced aromatherapist who developed a canine division of her product line after her dogs

experienced health problems. The project started in 1994, just after she completed an aromatherapy certification course, when she and her family (including two dogs and two cats) moved from New England to the Virgin Islands.

"Put northern animals in a tropical climate and all kinds of things happen," Thanas says. In no time, her Bichon Frise developed flea allergies, a lick granuloma, and hot spots. To relieve these symptoms, Thanas started making her own formulas, and the dog's brilliant white fur grew back quickly.

After four years in the Virgin Islands, during which she became an expert on all types of fungal infections, insect bites, and injuries, Thanas and her family returned to Massachusetts. One of her dreams was to sell her products in pet supply catalogs and through as many distributors as possible. To help make this possible, she recruited eight veterinarians in three states to test the products at their clinics.

The tests went well, and the result is AromaDog, a division of Silk Road Oils. Thanas says her AromaDog blends are sold in Japan, Canada, and the U.S., including through the KV Veterinary Supply catalog. "Chill Out is our number one seller. It's a spray mist con-



A Word About Quality

For best results, dog owners must be sure the essential oils they buy are of "therapeutic quality." Be forewarned, however, that there is much confusion in the marketplace as to how that term is defined. Fortunately, at the high end, there is also much agreement as to what's the best and what isn't. Professional aromatherapists agree that over 95 percent of the world's production of essential oils, including most brands sold in department stores and health food stores, are inappropriate for canine (or human) aromatherapy.

Most essential oils are chemically standardized for the pharmaceutical and perfume industries, with certain components removed and others added. Even if they are correctly labeled, 100 percent natural, and 100 percent pure, nearly all essential oils are produced from commercially grown plants, complete with traces of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and they are quickly distilled in very large batches under high heat and pressure for maximum yield. The results are very different from oils distilled in small batches at low pressure for longer periods.

Each of the makers of products mentioned in this article buy essential oils directly from manufacturers (distillers) or from distributors who travel to the source. They test the oils with gas chromatography or similar sophisticated equipment to ensure

the oils are correctly labeled and not adulterated with synthetic oils, pesticide residues, or anything else.

The best oils are made with plants that are organically raised or responsibly wildcrafted; distilled at low temperature and pressure; treated like vintage wines and never blended with other essential oils; labeled by botanical species according to the date, time, and place of harvest and distillation; and tested for purity and accuracy of chemotype.

Any product that contains synthetic essential oils should not be used for therapeutic purposes. Pure essential oils are very expensive, so some distributors adulterate them with synthetic oils, inexpensive natural oils with a similar fragrance, inexpensive vegetable oils, or solvents. Obviously, these adulterants and synthetic oils – sometimes called perfume or fragrance oils – do not offer the complex chemicals contained in natural essential oils.

To find true therapeutic-quality essential oils, order from suppliers like those in the recommended resources list (see page 11). These suppliers test essential oils for quality and maintain a network of relationships with manufacturers whose products are truly of superior quality. They are also familiar with safe canine applications for their products.

taining sweet marjoram, lavender, Roman chamomile, and other ingredients that you spray in the air. It calms hyperactive dogs, alleviates separation anxiety, and helps reduce chronic barking and even thunder phobia. Rescue group and veterinarians use it around their cages and in their waiting rooms, and groomers report that it helps dogs relax and stay calm even when things get hectic,” Thanas says.

Guardians should be forewarned that, just like supplements and herbs, the best aromatherapy products are not inexpensive. But as Thanas points out, “High-quality aromatherapy products save a lot of money in the long run. Despite what people may think when they see AromaDog products for the first time, ours is a serious company in a serious business. Even our colognes are immune system stimulants. As consumers and veterinarians, including conventional veterinarians, become familiar with our products, they realize that there’s a lot more to aromatherapy than a pretty smell.”

Getting the dog’s input

For Littleton, Colorado, aromatherapist Frances Fitzgerald Cleveland, the most important part of a canine aromatherapy treatment is letting the dog choose his or her own essential oils. Like all of the aromatherapists interviewed for this article, Cleveland offers private consultations and custom blending through her business, Frog Works. After learning about a dog’s case, she selects a handful of essential oils and sends them to the dog’s owner, with instructions explaining how to offer them so the dog can demonstrate his or her preference.

A five-year-old Standard Poodle named Beatrice was one of the many beneficiaries of this system. While playing in the Boston Arboretum with other dogs in 2003, Beatrice broke her calcaneal (hock) bone. The multiple fractures required pins inside and outside the leg for six weeks and the wearing of a cast for another four weeks.

“Just three days before the accident, she achieved her Excellent Agility title,” says her owner, Shelley Brauer. “The surgeon doubted that she would ever again have enough range of motion to jump properly.”

A friend in New



Beatrice flies again with the help of Frog Works’ essential oils.

Mexico saw a newspaper article about Cleveland’s aromatherapy work with animals at the Denver Zoo and sent it to Brauer. “I wanted to help Beatrice heal both physically and emotionally,” says Brauer. “In addition to being badly injured, she developed separation anxiety and seemed terrified to be left alone with that apparatus on her leg.” Cleveland’s aromatherapy sounded like something that could complement the conventional medical treatment that Beatrice was receiving.

After a consultation with Beatrice’s owner, Cleveland determined which essential oils would work best for Beatrice and sent seven diluted oils for her consideration: peppermint, sweet marjoram, rose otto, violet leaf, yarrow, neroli, and grapefruit. After ignoring all of them for days, Beatrice began to show an interest in violet leaf.

When Brauer put a drop on her hand, Beatrice licked it. “She lets us know that she wants her aromatherapy massage session by going into the room where the bottles are kept and looking at them,” Brauer says. “As her recovery has progressed, she has also become interested in rose otto, which helps her deal with emotional stress.”

Seven months after the accident, Beatrice’s surgeon examined her hock’s range of motion and called it “amazing.” She recently won two blue ribbons in an agility competition.

Dilute for dogs

Canadian aromatherapist and canine massage therapist Teresa Mazzella began blending products for dogs when her two young Boxers developed allergies, sensitive skin, pyoderma, and other ailments. Based in Leamington, Ontario, her AngelScent product line is growing fast, and its best-sellers are grooming sprays: “Bug Me Not” for repelling insects, “Canine Calm” for relaxation, and “Relief Cream” for sore muscles and arthritis.

“The most important advice I can offer,” says Mazzella, “is to dilute, dilute, dilute. It’s a mistake to assume that essential oils can be used on dogs the same way they are used on humans. And because dogs come in so many sizes, it’s important to dilute essential oils even more for small dogs and puppies. I make blends for dogs over 30 pounds and more dilute blends for dogs under 30 pounds



AngelScent makes balms, creams, and sprays.

as well as for very young dogs. Essential oils are concentrated, so tiny amounts of therapeutic-quality oils are highly effective.”

Proof is in the effectiveness

Before blending products for dogs at Happy Tails Canine Spa in Los Angeles, Lorna Paxton worked in the human health and beauty industry doing marketing and product development. “Knowing about manufacturing standards and ingredient information has helped a lot,” she says. To learn about essential oils, Paxton studied at the Pacific Institute of Aromatherapy.

“One of our most popular products is Calming Aromatherapy Spritzer,” she says. “It’s a detangling leave-in conditioner with chamomile and lavender that has a relaxing effect on dogs, even if they’re excited about traveling in the car or distracted by a trip to the vet. If you apply it before giving your dog a bath, her coat will be easier to brush out after, or you can apply it after bathing for improved conditioning. It can also be sprayed onto mats and tangles for effortless brushing.”

In addition to their essential oils, Paxton’s grooming products contain Ordenone, a water-based compound that binds with and removes the mercaptans, amines, sulfides, and acids in awful-smelling organic compounds, neutralizing even the worst doggy odors at their source.

With her marketing background, Paxton focuses as much on her products’ appearance as their ingredients. “It’s important that a product look good, smell good, be easy to use, and contain carefully thought-out ingredients that are themselves organically produced or of the highest quality. But it’s most important that the product work effectively,” she says.

Most pure

Sometimes people turn to aromatherapy products for what *isn’t* in them. Manufacturers of pet products are not required to

disclose their ingredients, so many list only a few appealing ingredients, omitting the synthetic or lower-cost constituents. The makers of the best aromatherapy products use just a small number of select ingredients – and proudly disclose each and every one of them.

“I encourage everyone to ask more questions of manufacturers,” says Sevi Kay, founder of Mundo LLC, in Millersville, Maryland. Mundo makes aromatherapy sprays, shampoos, and conditioners. “I want people to insist that manufacturers disclose what’s in a product. Manufacturers who use the highest quality ingredients and are proud of their training and expertise should be willing to share this information.”

Full disclosure was exactly what Lori Moreland was looking for when she was searching for a product for her four-month-old Newfoundland puppy, Magic. Not long after she received the last of her puppy vaccines, Magic broke out in a fit of blisters, sores, flaking, hair loss, and itching. As the owner of a pet supply store/salon, Pet Emporium in Arvada, Colorado, Moreland had access to a variety of shampoos but found that none of them helped – in fact, they made the conditions worse.

As she searched for products that could help relieve Magic’s discomfort, Moreland focused on those that were pure and free of potentially harmful chemicals. It was then that she realized that her salon’s “natural” shampoos contained unnatural detergents, foaming agents, and unnamed “proprietary ingredients.” Even though she was a retailer of these products, none of the manufacturers would reveal what was in them.

“That’s when I got to know Sevi Kay

and her Mundo line of shampoos,” says Moreland. “Sevi fully disclosed all the ingredients in her products. I tried the lavender just two days after Magic’s last irritating bath, and the results were astonishing. The itching ceased immediately, and within days, a year’s worth of sores were healing and new fur was growing where she had been bald.”

Moreland has continued to use Mundo’s products on Magic, to great effect. “Magic’s coat is now as thick, black, and shiny as any I have ever seen. I still bathe her every one to two weeks, depending on her swim schedule, but her coat is never dried out or flakey. The sores have been gone for almost a year,” says Moreland.

Pure, high-quality products like the ones discussed in this article are effective in helping dogs like Magic heal, and in not causing adverse reactions. This combination can be key for dogs with chemical sensitivities.

Therapeutic grooming

San Francisco resident Sharon Mueller founded Spa Dog Botanicals with help from aromatherapist Andrea Warren, who manufactures several aromatherapy product lines in Kansas. Mueller and Warren spent eight months designing, developing, and testing ingredients and blends before introducing 15 Spa Dog grooming products that have specific therapeutic uses. Each product’s blend of essential oils determines its overall effects. Spa Dog’s most popular product is “Smell Sweet Soothing Ear Care,” a blend of distilled water, aloe vera, vitamin E, organic cider vinegar, and essential oils that help soothe, heal, and prevent ear infections. Several products are age-specific.



Spa Dog offers separate grooming products for puppies, adults, and seniors.

“For example, we use a lot of warming blends for older dogs to help lift their spirits and keep them moving,” says Mueller. “We use antiviral blends for puppies and younger dogs, and for active adult dogs, we emphasize calming oils, like lavender and chamomile. We sell age-related products as kits, so it’s easy to start with the right combination of shampoos, soaps, ear cleaners, and sprays.”

Spa Dog’s products contain only natural ingredients and essential oils – nothing synthetic, says Warren. Additionally, some (but not all) of the ingredients are organic. The soap base is an olive oil soap; Spa Dog uses no sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS). 🐾

Next month: A canine aromatherapy crash course: How to blend essential oils yourself for your dog’s good health.

CJ Puotinen is author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats. She has also authored books about human health including Natural Relief from Aches and Pains. See “Resources,” page 24, for purchase info.

Recommended Resources for Quality Aromatherapy Products

Holistic Aromatherapy for Animals, by Kristen Leigh Bell (Findhorn Press, 2000), available from aromaleigh.com

Happy Tails Canine Spa Line, Los Angeles, CA. Lorna Paxton, (866) HAPPY-20 or (310) 476-6314, happytailsspa.com

AngelScent Aromatherapy, Leamington, Ontario, Canada. Teresa Mazzella, (519) 326-9312, angelscent.ca. U.S. distributor: Pawsitive Touch, (703) 599-5330, pawsitivetouch.com

Mundo LLC/CyberCanine, Millersville, MD. Sevi Kay, (410) 729-8449, cybercanine.com

Aroma Dog, Leicester, MA. Faith Thanas, (508) 892-9330, aromadog.com

Cathy’s Pet Potions, Visalia, CA. Cathy Franklin, (559) 739-0709

Frog Works, Littleton, CO. Frances Fitzgerald Cleveland, (303) 378-6693, frogworks.com



Frances Cleveland and a happy Frog Works client.

Pet Aromaetica, Lawrence, KS. Joan Clark, (785) 887-1030, joanclark.com

Spa Dog Botanicals, San Francisco, CA. Sharon Mueller, (866) SPA-DOGG or (415) 759-1593, spadogbotanicals.com. Products manufactured by Andrea Warren at Andrea’s Botanicals, (913) 652-3318

Remedial Housetraining

All healthy adult dogs can be housetrained, but you'll need commitment.

BY MARDI RICHMOND

Meet “Mollie,” a three-and-a-half-year-old terrier who lives in Aptos, California. (Her name has been changed to protect the guilty!) Mollie is a great dog, except for one not-so-small issue: Mollie is not housetrained. She does not know when or where she is supposed to go. Left to her own devices, Mollie would eliminate in the living room, the bedroom, on top of a pile of clean laundry, and, yes, even in her own crate.

Mollie’s housetraining issues, however extreme, are easily explained. The first several years of Mollie’s life were spent in a poorly run breeding kennel. She was not only never formally housetrained, but also forced to urinate and defecate regularly in her living space. In addition, Mollie also developed an infection that made it impossible for her to hold it, even when she was crated. By the time she came to live in her current home, her lack of inhibition was cemented, and housetraining has been her number one problem behavior.

Mollie is not a bad dog; in all other ways she is a wonderful companion! And she is not alone in her problem; many adult dogs

are not fully housetrained. Fortunately, there is hope for Mollie and other dogs like her. Adult dogs, even dogs whose histories have stacked the odds against them, can learn an appropriate place and time to go!

Understanding the problem

Of course, not all dogs with housetraining problems come from kennels or shelters. Adult dogs can have a variety of explanations for their housetraining failures. Even dogs who have been in stable homes since puppyhood can have trouble with housetraining.

Some of the most common reasons that dogs fail to learn when and where to eliminate include:

- **Having a medical problem.** If you have a dog that was reliably housetrained and suddenly has housetraining problems, consider the possibility of a medical issue. Infections, certain illnesses, and some medications can all contribute to house-soiling.

- **Not truly understanding the “house” rules.** For example, a dog may understand that he needs to go outside and will do so when he has free access (such as a doggy door), but not understand that he needs to hold it when he does not have free access.

- **Not having generalized the rules from one place to another.** A dog may have been house-trained in a previous home, but not know the same rules apply in a new home. Or, a dog may know to go outside at *his* house, but not understand that he also



WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

- **Start with a thorough veterinary examination, to make sure your dog does not have a medical excuse for her incontinence.**

- **Invest in a large enough crate, X-pen, or baby gates to confine your dog to a safe zone when she is not being supervised.**

- **Don't let your “supervision” get lax. No exceptions.**

- **On a regular schedule, take your dog to the area where you want her to eliminate. When she goes, praise and reward her copiously.**

- **Do not punish your dog for “accidents.” No exceptions.**



Crates, X-pens, and baby gates will be your biggest allies in the campaign to housetrain your dog. Access to the entire house must be earned, slowly, as the dog exhibits reliability.

needs to go outside when visiting a friend’s house or staying in a hotel.

- **Being asked to “hold it” for too long.** Some dogs can easily go all day without eliminating. For other dogs, holding it all day is very difficult or even impossible. This can be especially true for dogs who are small, young, elderly, or who have a medical problem.

- **Having learned that eliminating in their living space is acceptable.** Like Mollie, dogs that have spent much of their lives in kennels often lose their natural inhibition about eliminating where they eat and sleep. In addition, dogs with a history of “accidents” in the home because of an illness, poor management, or other factors

may simply learn that it is less stressful to go inside than to try to “hold it.”

Getting down to business

Housetraining is not a single behavior. Rather, it is a whole series of interrelated behaviors.

For a dog to be fully housetrained, he needs to understand where he should go as well as where he shouldn't. He needs to learn to “hold it” (sometimes for hours) until he is in an appropriate place. He needs to be able to communicate his need to go in a way his people will understand and respond expediently. And he needs to generalize these behaviors to all indoor (and some outdoor) situations. For any adult dog with a history of housetraining issues, it can also mean unlearning past behaviors.

If this sounds like a lot of learning on your dog's part (as well as training on your part), don't despair. These simple steps can help you teach your dog the skills he needs to become a full-fledged, housetrained dog.

■ **First, supervise your dog at all times when he is inside, except when he is crated or otherwise confined.** This is the key to success. You must supervise your dog inside your home at all times to prevent accidents. The more consistent you can be, the faster your dog will succeed.

Note that in this case, “supervise” means much more than having your dog with you in the same room. It means keeping your attention focused on the dog so as to prevent *any* opportunity for the dog to make a mistake, or, at the very least, to be able to interrupt him “midstream” – a good oppor-

tunity to rush him outside and then praise him for going in the “right” place (more on this below).

The best way to accomplish this when you are not actually looking at the dog or playing with him, is often referred to as the “umbilical cord” method. If you are watching TV, working on your computer, washing dishes, or otherwise occupied, clip a leash onto your dog's collar, and tie the other end around your waist or belt loop. It should be long enough to allow him to sit or lay at your feet, but short enough to prevent him from making a move to eliminate without your knowledge.

When you are neither actively watching your dog nor physically linked to him by a short leash, he should be confined, as described below.

■ **Confine your dog when you can't supervise him.** When you cannot actively supervise your dog, leave him confined in a crate, X-pen, or other small secure space. Because dogs are not as likely to soil where they eat or sleep, a sleeping area like a crate is ideal.

■ If your dog regularly eliminates in his crate or other confined space, and your veterinarian has ruled out all health problems as the cause, **try changing your confinement area.** If you have been using a crate, for example, change to an X-pen in a different part of the house. Start by feeding your dog in her new confinement space and leaving her alone there for only short periods.

If your dog has been eliminating on her

bedding, change the type of bedding you use, too. If she's been sleeping (and eliminating!) on a blanket, switch to a flat thick bed of newspaper, or a fleece pad. The idea is to create a new “living space” with no former associations for your dog as a place to eliminate. Continue to use the crate as a living space for longer periods until you have established the new confinement area as a living space.

■ **Set up a routine.** You've probably heard this before: what goes in on schedule, comes out on schedule. Establish regular feeding, sleeping, and waking times. Take your dog out, at minimum, upon waking, after eating and drinking, before leaving home, immediately after play, when you first arrive home, and before bedtime.

■ **Teach your dog where to go!** This is an important and often overlooked step. Pick a spot that you regularly take your dog to; don't just put him outside, go with him. When your dog goes in the appropriate spot, immediately reward the behavior with praise and a treat. A dog who is rewarded for going in a specific spot will be more motivated to go in that place and may also begin asking to go to the place (offering the behavior!) because it earns rewards.

■ **Read your dog's signals.** Look for clues in his behavior that tell you he needs to go outside. Dogs won't always go to the back door. Some common signs include acting restless, “bugging” you, pacing, and just before the act, circling. But sometimes the behavior is more obscure, so be

Is It a Housetraining Problem? Or Something Else?

When talking about housetraining for adult dogs, it's important to understand that not all house soiling is a housetraining problem. Other physical and behavior issues can contribute to or cause a dog to eliminate in the house. If you suspect your dog may have any of these issues, please consult with a behavior counselor or qualified trainer.

■ **Submissive or excitement urination.** Dogs who leak urine during greetings, when meeting new people, when you first come home, or during play may be exhibiting submissive or excitement urination. This is a confidence issue (and is often outgrown as a young dog matures), not a housetraining issue!

■ **Marking.** When we think about territory marking, most of us think only about male dogs. But male *and* female dogs can mark territory with both urine and feces, outside *and* indoors.

■ **Separation anxiety.** Dogs suffering from separation anxiety may eliminate shortly after you leave your home, often within just a few minutes. (If you are not sure the accidents are happening shortly after you leave, try returning home after a half hour to find out.) Consult with a behavior professional to help you resolve your dog's separation anxiety.

■ **Fears and phobias.** Thunderstorms, fireworks, and other fear-inducing noises can cause some dogs to urinate or defecate in the home.

■ **Health issues.** Any onset of house-soiling behavior in a previously housetrained dog, urination during sleep, or other loss of bladder and bowel control should be evaluated by a veterinarian. Urinary tract infections, certain illnesses, and some medications can contribute to house-soiling problems.

observant. (One of my dogs licked the cat's ears when she needed to go outside – a behavior I assume she learned because we always paid attention to her when she paid attention to the cat.)

In addition, try to anticipate your dog's needs. Does he always need to go outside immediately after waking? When someone comes to the door? After playing?



The crate or X-pen where your dog will spend his unsupervised time should be comfortable and cosy.

■ **When accidents happen, don't punish!** If you actually catch your dog in the act – and I mean midstream, not one second after – it's okay to interrupt with a clap or noise and then rush the dog outside. Be sure to reward your dog when he finishes up outside. If you discover the act afterward, even immediately afterward, don't punish your dog. It really won't help, and could set back the process by making your dog afraid to go in front of you. Simply clean up the accident well with an enzyme neutralizing cleaner. (See "Pees on Earth," WDJ January 1999, for a review of the best enzyme-based cleaning agents.)

■ **Gradually expand the "safe" zone.** Once you have established a routine wherein your dog is supervised or confined, goes outside on a schedule, and avoids accidents for a month or longer, begin cautiously increasing your dog's freedom. For example, if your dog's confined space is a small X-pen in the kitchen, you might begin by expanding the size of the pen. Once he proves himself reliable in the slightly larger space, leave him confined to the kitchen.

Gradually increase his space until he is reliable within your entire home. If problems arise (remember that mistakes are part of the learning process), simply back up to the last reliable step and take it slower. Taking it too slowly is much better than rushing the process, especially with a dog that has a history of housetraining issues.

Patience pays off

The most frequent question I have been

asked about housetraining an adult dog (and puppies, too) is, "How long will it take?" The answer is, "It depends." It depends on the dog, the situation, and you. There is no magic formula or specific amount of time.

I *have* noticed that often people want it to take a lot less time than is re-

alistic. (I think we've all heard stories of the dog that was housetrained in a week and wish that could be our dog.) Think about all of the steps the dog needs to learn – to go in a specific place, to hold it for a period of time, to ask when he needs to go out, to apply these rules to all inside areas. Be patient! This is a lot for a dog to learn. Plan on a few months at minimum, and a year or more for a dog with a longer history of housetraining issues.

Of course, that doesn't mean you have to deal with your dog actually eliminating in the house for months! Remember the first two steps: supervise and confine. With diligence, you can establish a routine that will help you avoid most accidents within a few weeks, if not sooner.

Remember Mollie? After a few short months, Mollie was 100 percent reliable in her X-pen (remember, this is a dog who would eliminate in her crate!) and when supervised by her people. She's still not ready to be left unsupervised (and with her history, it may take longer than most for her to be ready), but Mollie is certainly well on her way to becoming fully housetrained. Patience does pay off! 🐾

Mardi Richmond is a writer and trainer who lives in Santa Cruz, California, with two wonderful dogs and one human partner. She is the coauthor of Ruffing It: The Complete Guide to Camping with Dogs. See "Resources," page 24 for purchase info.

A Word to Our Readers: Whole Dog Journal's Mailing List Policy

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From the Mouths of Dogs

The mouth is the site of the two most common canine diseases.

BY RANDY KIDD, DVM, PHD

Pokey and I are on the floor, man and beast in a playful tussle. I poke, scratch, pull, and tug on the genial Lab-mix, using my fingers and arms. I fake a left jab and poke him with my right hand. His only recourse is to duck and jump, first in retreat, then, with lips drawn in a mock snarl, pouncing on me and mouthing my hands and shirt. Fortunately, Pokey came from a family of nine puppies, cared for by seven home-schooled kids, so he was well socialized as a puppy and knows how to mouth-play without biting too hard.

A dog's mouth is his most intimate connection to the outside world, his gateway for primary contact. He uses his mouth for sustenance, investigation, and communication. He uses his jaws as a tool; they can carry, crush, slice, gnaw, grind, or, as in Pokey's case, gently grab and render my "superior" hands helpless.

The mouth is also the beginning point for the dog's harvest of life-sustaining nutrients. The initial identification of immune-stimulating substances contained in

whatever the dog ingests starts in the mouth. The tonsils, lying deep in the mouth, are a prominent site of lymph tissue, and the mouth is lined with other lymphoid elements – all of which transport immune-sensing information to the rest of the body.

It is important to keep this "gateway" function of the mouth in mind as we consider how to best deliver remedies to enhance the innate immune system's ability to respond. Herbs that contact the mouth's lymphoid tissues (that is, herbal remedies not encased within capsules) have the advantage of stimulating this early alert, immune-enhancing lymphoid tissue.

But from the perspective of a veterinarian, a dog's mouth is mostly a primary site of disease. Periodontitis (inflammation of the tissues surrounding a tooth) and dental calculus (an accumulation of mineral salts on teeth) are respectively the number one and number two problems seen in dogs over seven years of age. Periodontal disease is present in an estimated 50 to 80 percent of all dogs.

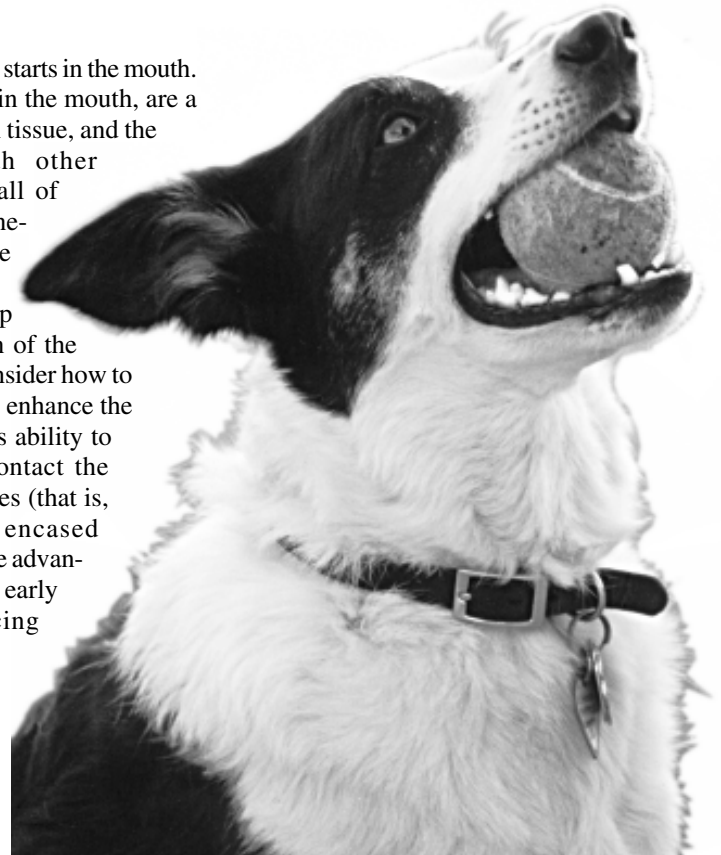
Furthermore, there is evidence that periodontitis also predisposes animals to a number of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and even respiratory disease. At least one (human) study has indicated that poor oral health is a stronger predictor of heart disease than markers such as fibrinogen (a clotting factor and indicator of inflammation), low HDL (good) cholesterol, or high triglycerides.

In addition, endotoxins have been isolated from calculus residues on the teeth of dogs, and there is anecdotal evidence (perhaps related to the endotoxins) that dental

disease may also be responsible for (or at least increase the likelihood of) other chronic diseases such as arthritis.

Unfortunately, when it comes to pointing the finger at who or what is to be blamed for much of our pets' dental problems, "We have met the enemy, and they are us." We have created at least a two-fold problem.

First, we have bred dogs for cuteness; many of the toy breeds have jaws too small to accommodate all their teeth. This forces teeth to grow abnormally and the resulting misalignments and malocclusions create foci for future calculus buildup. Second, our commercial foods don't provide the tooth-cleansing effects of pulling meat and other soft tissues off raw bones, as well as time-consuming gnawing on raw hide and bones.



Dogs use their mouths to eat, drink, communicate, scratch itches, carry things, defend themselves, and, of course, play. Oral disease threatens their ability to do any of these.

The Whole Dog Journal™



WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

- **Condition your dog to enjoy mouth and gum massage, so you can examine and brush his teeth easily, daily.**
- **Make regular professional dental cleaning a priority.**
- **If your dog is prone to poor dental health, administer herbal and nutritional antioxidants.**
- **Seek out a veterinary homeopath and/or acupuncturist if your dog has oral cancer.**

The canine mouth

The dog's teeth and gums are the most important considerations in the mouth, both because the incidence of disease of the teeth and gums is so high, and because their influence on overall health and disease is so profound. However, I'll briefly mention other structures of the oral cavity and oropharynx (an ill-defined area that includes the posterior part of the oral cavity and the pharynx) and give a brief list of potential problems that may occur in them.

The oral cavity is an open-ended tube that functions in prehension (the act of seizing or grasping), mastication (chewing), fluid intake, taste, and swallowing.

The relative size of the dewlap and amount of flesh associated with a dog's lips are characteristic of the individual breed. Facial expressions are controlled by the lip muscles, which are innervated by the facial nerve. Several cranial nerves innervate the dog's fleshy and highly active tongue, providing muscular control and sensory innervation from the taste buds – round, prominent structures on the posterior portion of the upper surface of the tongue.

Salivary glands open into the oral cavity; saliva provides an acid medium along with bacterial-fighting substances that help to keep any disease process from proliferating in the mouth.

The palate forms the dorsal roof of the oral cavity, separating it from the nasal cavity. The caudal (rear-most)

part of the palate is the soft palate, a mobile structure that functions during swallowing to restrict access of the food bolus into the nasal area. The epiglottis is a cartilaginous structure that moves to open the trachea (wind pipe) during inspiration; during swallowing, the epiglottis moves to restrict the opening to the trachea.

The palatine tonsils are elliptically-shaped lymph nodes lying on the lateral walls of the oropharynx within crypts formed by folds of the pharyngeal wall. In the dog they are normally visible, and in puppies they may stand out of their crypts.

The right and left condyles (rounded projections on a bone) of the mandible (lower jaw) articulates with the temporal bone of the skull at the temporomandibular joint (TMJ). Omnivorous animals classically have a large condyle that permits up and down and lateral movement. In the carnivorous dog, which has smaller condyles with

only limited lateral movement, the TMJ is limited largely to hinge-like movements.

Canine dental structures

A dog's deciduous (baby) teeth erupt between two weeks and eight weeks after birth. From two to six months of age, the baby teeth shed as the permanent or adult teeth erupt. Eruption time varies according to breed; the larger the breed, the earlier the eruption sequence. Dogs seldom show signs related to teething; the most frequent problem encountered is retained deciduous teeth. Retained baby teeth need to be removed to prevent buildup of calculus on them, and anesthesia may be required for the process.

Eruption and full growth of the crown of all the permanent teeth is complete in most dogs by 10 to 12 months; however, the tooth roots (especially of the canine tooth) may not be fully developed until as late as 30 months of age. (This is a consideration if a young dog fractures a tooth.)

Most dogs exhibit a so-called "scissor bite" wherein the maxillary (upper) canine tooth ("fang") fits behind the mandibular (lower) canine tooth, and this lower canine

fits between the upper canine and the upper lateral incisor (front teeth). Breed selection, however, has resulted in major variations in normal occlusion in the dog. Maloccluded teeth (teeth that don't align properly into the scissor bite) are relatively common in toy



The classic "scissor bite."

breeds and in dogs with pronounced over- or under-bites. Dogs with malocclusion are more prone to calculus buildup.

The dental unit consists of the teeth and their supporting tissues, the periodontium. The latter consists of the gingiva (gums), the supporting bony portion of the tooth's root structures, and the periodontal ligament.

The teeth vary in size, shape, and number of roots, depending upon location and function. A tooth consists of a mass of dentin surrounding the innermost pulpal tissues. The root portion of the dentin is covered with cementum; the crown portion with enamel. Enamel provides resistance to wear and protects underlying dentinal tissue from damage or caries (cavities). Penetration or removal of the enamel exposes the nerve endings located in the dentin.

Around the circumference of each tooth is a one- to two-millimeter deep gingival sulcus (groove or furrow) between the gingiva and enamel surface of the tooth. The sulcus is the site where food particles and other debris most frequently accumulate, leading to inflammation of the gums and eventual calculus buildup.

Diseases of the mouth

Dental calculus buildup and the resultant periodontitis is the most significant disease condition of the mouth, both in terms of numbers and potential for severe long-term disease; this process is dealt with below. Other diseases of the oral cavity include:

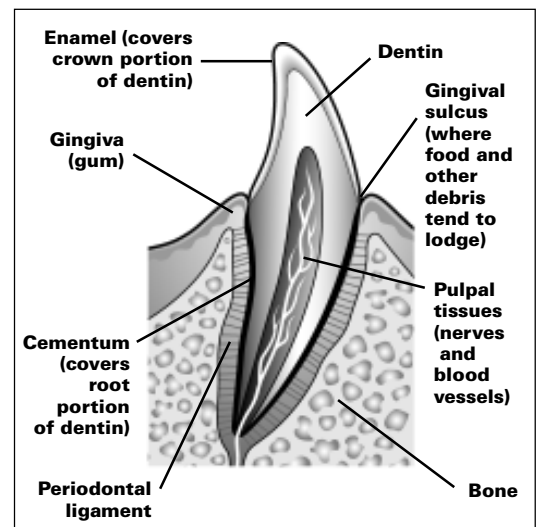
■ **Stomatitis** – Infections anywhere within the oral cavity. These can be caused by any number of microorganisms and are often induced by trauma or injuries.

■ **Glossitis** – Infection of the tongue. Also commonly due to injuries, ingestion of caustics, licking sharp objects, or biting into electrical cords.

■ **Ulcers** – These can occur anywhere in the mouth, but they are more common on the gums opposite heavy accumulations of calculus. They are often related to an immune deficiency, so treatment should include herbs or other alternative medicines to restore balance to the immune system.

■ **Hyperplasia of the gingiva** – Most commonly due to periodontal disease. (See also epulis.)

■ **Epulis** – A nonspecific term applied to benign, tumor-like masses of the gingiva.



Parts of a tooth and its supporting tissues.

These may occur in any animal, but some breeds (Boxers, for example) seem to have a high incidence, indicating the possibility of genetic involvement.

■ **Lip-fold dermatitis** – Inflammation at the fold of lips, between the upper and lower lips. This condition is oftentimes secondary to periodontal inflammation, but may also be due to toxic materials leaching out of plastic food and water dishes. Switch to glass, porcelain, or stainless steel dishes.

■ **Neoplasia** – Cancers of the mouth can be aggressive, but initially they are difficult to differentiate from the benign epulis. If you see a growth in the mouth, get an accurate diagnosis via a biopsy, fast.

■ **Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) problems** – The joint may be subluxated, a condition that may be exacerbated by calculus buildup. The pain of subluxation can lead to symptoms similar to those of oral disease – refusal to eat, slobbering, painful to the touch, etc. If your dog exhibits these signs, consider having a veterinary chiropractor check him out; deep massage often returns the TMJ to normal function (providing the calculus has been removed).

■ **Secondary conditions** – Oral lesions may occur as a secondary problem, related to diseases such as uremia and diabetes.

Treating oral diseases

Conventional treatment for most of these diseases consists of antibiotics, possibly along with glucocorticoids and/or antihistamines. My experience would indicate that alternate therapies almost always work as well as, or better than, any conventional treatment I once used.

I think the most important component for oral health (after teeth cleaning) is the immune system. Consider herbs (such as echinacea) and other herbal medicines, which can be used internally to enhance the whole body immune system, or they can be used as a tea or tincture as a mouthwash. (See herbal section below).

Nutritional support is almost as important. Add therapeutic levels (check with your holistic vet for correct dosages) of vitamins A, C, and E, and herbal and other antioxidants such as coenzyme Q10, thyme, goldenseal, or myrrh. Acupuncture and/or homeopathy can be added if necessary; I have both to be helpful when treating oral cancers.

Professional Dental Cleaning

Almost every veterinary clinic in the country has an ultrasonic dental scaler that is an efficient tool for cleaning the teeth. However, equally important for professional cleaning is a quality tooth polisher, and not all practices have kept up to date with the newer models. Neither do all clinics use trained technicians to do the cleaning. I encourage dog owners to ask about their veterinarian's equipment and the professional training of the dental technicians.

Be aware that human and veterinary homeopaths feel that dental cleaning using ultrasound instrumentation is likely to "antidote" any homeopathic remedy the animal is currently being given; perhaps there is some interference between the energetics of the ultrasound and the remedy. When your dog needs a dental cleaning, advise your homeopathic vet and let her advise you how to proceed with further homeopathic dosing.

As discussed in last month's issue ("Anesthesia-Free Teeth Cleaning"), dogs really do need to be anesthetized to do a thorough job of examining the teeth and gums and to really get the teeth clean down deep into the sulcus. While there is always a certain amount of risk inherent with anesthesia, anesthetic drugs are much safer today than in years past. And the risk of letting calculus buildup develop into severe periodontal disease (and on to more serious systemic problems) is much greater than that posed from the anesthetic. I do recommend that any sick or older dog (beyond about seven years of age) have a screening blood test (CBC and blood chemistry) to be sure that there is nothing physically wrong that could increase the risks of the anesthesia.

For all dental procedures, whether they be simple cleaning or more complex (such as those listed below), I recommend a pre- and post-procedural therapeutic dose of antioxidants (vitamins A, C, and E along with herbal antioxidants) and immune enhancers such as echinacea. As always, I try to avoid any unnecessary antibiotics. (See "Dangers of Antibiotic Misuse," WDJ March 2004.)

Depending on your individual dog and on how well you are able to keep her teeth clean, the time between professional dental cleanings will vary from about once every four months to every four years or so throughout your dog's lifetime.

Advanced dentistry

Dentistry has been an important component of veterinary care since before the time of the first true veterinarians. Equine dentistry was practiced by the Chinese as early as 600 BC, and in 333 BC Aristotle gave an account on periodontal disease in horses in his book *The History of Animals*.

In just the past few decades, veterinary medicine has made amazing strides in the art and science of dentistry. Today veterinary practitioners can become Board Certified in dentistry – a process that takes several years of advanced study and then passing the test given by the American Veterinary Dentistry College. Today there are more than 70 Veterinary Dental Diplomates in the U.S.

Almost any procedure available to the human population is now available to our animals, including endodontics (root canals), orthodontics (braces), restoration and pro-orthodontics (crowns), surgical extractions, oral fracture repair, periodontal treatment and surgery, oral surgery, and oral radiology.

Fractures, especially of the canine teeth, are fairly common, and while simple removal is often the best answer, dental specialists may be able to put a crown on the tooth to restore it to normal function. Malocclusion is another (unfortunately) common problem in our dog breeds – where teeth that don't have enough room to develop normally because the dog's mouth is too small or abnormally shaped to allow growth. Braces have been used to help teeth grow into a more normal bite pattern.

For any of these more advanced procedures – crown restoration, root canals, or orthodontics – it is best to consult with a board certified veterinary dentist.



Periodontal disease

Periodontal disease is the general term used to denote diseases of the periodontium, and it includes gingivitis, periodontitis, and periodontal abscess. Periodontal disease is by far the most common oral disease found in all species and is arguably the most common disease condition seen in small animal practice. As previously mentioned, it is found in 50-80 percent of all dogs and its incidence approaches 95 percent in animals over two years of age. The severity of periodontal disease correlates with the quantity of plaque and calculus present on the teeth as well as with the age of the animal.

Plaque is a soft colorless coating found on tooth surfaces, from the crown extending deep down into the sulcus. Plaque is not readily seen by the naked eye unless it is either naturally stained by dietary constituents or is extremely thick. It can, however, be demonstrated by plaque-disclosing dyes.

Contrary to popular belief, **plaque** is not a food residue. Its formation begins with adhesion of bacteria onto a thin film of an acidic glycoprotein that precipitates from the saliva onto the enamel surfaces of the teeth. Unless it is removed, plaque formation is extensive after a day or two – further reason for daily brushings.

The accumulation of plaque is enhanced by the presence of surface irregularities, the most common of which is calculus. Brush-

ing with a stiff-bristled toothbrush can scratch the tooth's surfaces, and scratches may occur when metal scrapers are used to remove calculus – thus the importance of dental polishing after every dental cleaning procedure.

Calculus is a mass of calcium salts precipitated from saliva. Calculus is easily seen and appears as varying amounts of off-white, yellow, or brown crusty material on the teeth – often concentrated at the tooth-gingival interface. Calculus acts as a focal point that attracts and retains plaque, a characteristic that is even more important in the creation of disease than is its function as a mechanical irritant. It has also been shown that endotoxins from the bacteria found in plaque may be found in calculus.

Calculus is not seen to any great degree in animals younger than nine months of age.

Gingivitis is inflammation of the gingiva or gum. The first noticeable sign of gingivitis is a noticeably darker red color where the tooth meets the gum line. This early inflammation may lead to excessive growth of the gingiva, and as the gingiva grows, it tends to move away from its once-firm contact with the tooth. A blunt-tipped probe into the sulcus is diagnostic; the probe will normally penetrate one to three millimeters. Any deeper penetration indicates gingivitis. For most dogs, a complete oral examination, including probing the sulcus

of all teeth, requires anesthesia or at least sedation.

The treatment for gingivitis is the removal of bacterial plaque from the surfaces of the teeth (tooth brushing) on a consistent basis. Conventional treatments might include chlorhexidine gluconate which, when applied to teeth, effectively treats established gingivitis; other antibiotics such as clindamycin, tetracycline, and metronidazole have also been used for treatment. However, plaque and gingivitis rapidly return when treatment is discontinued, and all these products carry with them the usual concerns about antibiotic use. We cannot expect any long-term results without consistent tooth brushing.

Clinical signs

There are several symptoms that may lead to the diagnosis of a problem in the dog's mouth, including a change in eating habits, pawing at the mouth, abnormal salivation, oral hypersensitivity, facial swelling, draining tracts, obvious blood or bloody (or brown-colored) saliva, sneezing and nasal discharge, abnormal behavior (some dogs, especially old and cranky ones, can become even crankier when their teeth hurt), and eye changes (infections around the upper teeth or upper jaw area often cause swellings around the eyes).

Facial swelling is a common symptom

Daily Brushing for a Healthy Dog: Just Do It!

This is the one area where you can absolutely do the most good for the health of your dog's mouth; dental health also plays a significant part in overall health. So get into a habit of daily brushing (twice daily is even better). It's best to start when your dog is a puppy, but you can begin anytime. Get her accustomed to your fingers in her mouth, for very brief and then slowly increasing periods. Rub her gums and teeth, upper and lower, from front to back, and inside and outside. Give her lots of praise, and treats afterward.

Think of this as "mouth play" rather than the drudgery of tooth brushing. Done properly, the finger-in-the-mouth routine should create the "play mouthing" dogs routinely engage in with the other dogs of the pack.

After your dog has learned to enjoy or at least accept your fingers, you can begin to taste test for a tooth cleanser your dog likes. There are quite a number of commercial tooth cleansing products for dogs. Be sure your toothpaste is made for dogs; human products often contain detergents or other substances that are meant to be spit out – something your dog can't do.

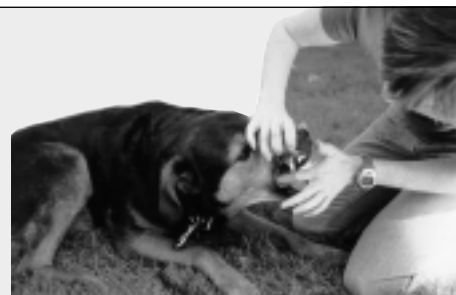
I'd also encourage you to try products that con-

tain herbs that offer natural antibiotic activity.

Check your local pet supply store; a number of companies now sell pet toothbrushes that slip over your finger and other brushes specially adapted to working in a dog's mouth.

The key to success is to use a toothpaste that your dog likes. I think this is the step where many folks give up. They try one brand of toothpaste, the dog absolutely hates it, and the next thing you know it is an impossible struggle just to get him to open his mouth. With the dozens of products out there, you should be able to come up with one that is acceptable.

No matter what tooth cleanser you and your dog have chosen, the most important part of the brushing technique is to brush all the teeth and gums, inside and out, with special focus at the sulcus – the point where the tooth meets the gum. Brush at a 45-degree angle, aimed into the gum line, in an oval pattern. Concentrate a little extra on the outside of the upper teeth, where most dogs suffer the most tartar accretion.



of almost any disease of the oral cavity, and a thorough exam of the entire mouth and its structures is indicated whenever a facial swelling is noticed.

While all the above symptoms can be significant, the first and most important tip-off to dental or other oral problems is halitosis (bad breath.) A healthy dog's breath does not smell bad; anytime your dog's breath has an off odor, be suspicious of dental or oral problems. (Some digestive or metabolic upsets can cause off odors, but these are less common.)

Plaque is difficult to see without staining aids, but calculus is easy to spot; it's the chalky or crusty-looking, off-white or brown stuff on the surface of the teeth, and it is often associated with a reddened gum line.

One of the problems with diagnosing tooth conditions is that, oftentimes after an initial painful period, the pain and any other associated symptoms go away but the condition remains. This is a further reason for a complete inspection of all the far reaches of the oral and oropharyngeal cavities.

Holistic dental care

For humans, ideal dental care consists of twice daily tooth brushing, rinsing with a mouthwash, tongue cleaning, irrigation, and the addition of supplements that support oral health. For our dogs, most of these are impossible, so we rely on daily brushing, food supplements that support oral health, at least several times a week chewing on hard food (foods designed to clean teeth and/or bones), and periodic professional cleanings.

■ **Nutrition** – Two aspects of a dog's diet are very important for maintaining dental and oral health: The dentrifice (cleaning) activity of the diet, and supplements that can help maintain healthy teeth and gums.

Many people promote diets that include raw bone – both in the form of recreational chew bones and in raw bone that is consumed – crediting both the mechanical action of chewing the bones *and* the nutritional benefit of a fresh, natural calcium supplement. (For more on this topic, see “Bones of Contention,” September 2000 and “Dem Bones,” August 2003.) Others prefer to give their dogs rawhide or other chews for their dentrifice action. (For selection tips, see “What Choosy Chewers Choose,” May 2003.)

There are a number of nutritional supplements that can contribute to oral health. In all cases, check with your holistic veterinarian for proper dosages and for the length

of time to continue the doses. All doses depend on the severity of the disease and on the size of the dog. Larger, therapeutic doses may be used for the short term; maintenance doses may be given over longer periods.

Vitamins A, C, and E can be given for their antioxidant activity; vitamin C also helps aid healing. Vitamin A can be given at doses from 5,000 to 10,000 IU per day. Vitamin C (crystalline ascorbic acid) can be given from 250 milligrams to several grams daily. Vitamin E can be given from 200 up to 2,000 IU daily. I repeat: Discuss this supplementation with your vet.

Coenzyme Q10 is a potent antioxidant that reduces damage to cells, and has been shown to be especially beneficial for reducing gingival inflammation and periodontal pocket depth in humans. The typical recommended dosage is 0.25 to 1.0 mg per pound of body weight per day.

Bioflavonoids, especially **rutin** and **hesperidin**, are required for the formation of collagen, the protein building block for gum tissue, cartilage, and bone. They also play an important role in maintaining a competent immune system. These are available within the formula of some toothpastes, or they may be added to your dog's diet as a supplement, from 50 to 500 mg daily.

■ **Herbs** – Almost any herb or herbal combination that has antibiotic, vulnerary (wound healing), or astringent activity can be useful in helping to fend off oral disease; the key is to find herbs with a taste your dog doesn't hate. I look at herbal teas as a mouthwash substitute for dogs. It's true you can't get a dog to swoosh the fluid around in the mouth and then spit it out. But if we use teas that can be swallowed, just the contact of the tea with the oral cavity and teeth can be beneficial.

Green tea is known to be especially beneficial for preventing oral and dental problems. (In humans green tea has been shown to help prevent cavities, and there is some evidence that it may reverse the progress of oral cancers.) First, try the brewed green tea, straight, in your dog's water dish. If he rejects that, try adding a little meat broth as flavoring.

For drinking teas, also consider calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), chamomile (*Anthemus nobile* or *Matricaria chamomilla*), thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*), and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Any of these will help prevent oral disease, and chances are good that your dog will eventually begin to like their taste.

For treatment of oral lesions, a strong herbal tea or tincture can be simply squirted into the mouth. Or you can make a slurry (some herbal product, boiled with a small amount of water, just enough to make into a slurry) and apply it directly to the lesions.

Herbs to consider for treatment include barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), red root (*Ceanothus americanus*), agrimony (*Agri- monia eupatoria*), myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*), and goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*). Unfortunately, many of these herbs are not especially tasty.

■ **Acupuncture** – Acupuncture can be an effective means of treating some oral disease. Most of the treatment protocols call for treating through the Large Intestine, Stomach, and Small Intestine meridians, with points along the Conception Vessel and Governing Vessel also commonly included.

■ **Homeopathy** – Many homeopathic remedies are used for tooth problems, but most of these are related to specific types of tooth pain that only someone who can speak can describe. *Fragaria* (wood-strawberry) is a special case remedy that has been used by some homeopaths to help enhance the removal of and to prevent the buildup of calculus – always with the caveat that the only true way to prevent calculus is to keep plaque off the teeth.

Some homeopathic vets report that they have seen calculus disappear in animals when they use a constitutional remedy for other conditions. I have not personally witnessed this, but I have treated animals that were able to go much longer between professional cleanings while we were using the dog's constitutional remedy – after we had initially cleaned the teeth.

However, I *have* had reasonably good success using homeopathy for treating oral cancers. By that I mean that the rare successes I have had almost all came from homeopathic treatments – always relying on finding the animal's constitutional remedy. (For more on homeopathy, see “Tiny Doses, Huge Effects,” June 2000.) 🐾

Dr. Randy Kidd earned his DVM degree from Ohio State University and his Ph.D. in Pathology/Clinical Pathology from Kansas State University. A past president of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, he's author of Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Dog Care and Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care (see page 24).

Gear of the Year

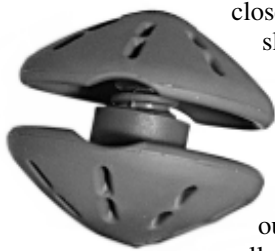
Our favorite dog care products from this year's reviews.

behavior modification tools

How can a toy improve a dog's behavior, you ask? Ah, well! Just think of all the naughty behaviors a dog cannot participate in while he's busy playing with a toy! How do you make the toy so irresistible to guarantee his interest? You load it with food, of course!

The Kong was the first toy of this type on the market, and while we will admire it forever (and keep a supply on hand for our own dogs), we also appreciate the innovations built into later-generation products by competing manufacturers. In 2004, Premier Pet Products introduced an entire line of products ("Busy Buddy Treat-Holding Rubber Chew Toys") that enabled dog owners to load the toys with treats to safely distract and occupy their dogs.

The one we like the most is called the **Twist 'n Treat**. The inviting rubber material and its innovative saucer shape make it a highly successful treat-dispensing toy. It's a snap to load with its two-piece, twist-together design and – unlike the Kong – just as easy to clean. It's also adjustable; when the toy is twisted tightly



closed, the treats can only fall out of a few slight dips in the edges of the toy, and a dog has to really work – licking, chewing, and flinging the toy – to get the treats out. A less-motivated dog can be encouraged by twisting the toy slightly open, so the treats pay out more generously. Twist 'n Treat comes in three sizes: small, medium, and large.

TWIST 'N TREAT, MADE BY PREMIER PET PRODUCTS, LLC. \$8 - \$16. (888) 640-8840 OR BUSYBUDDYTOYS.COM

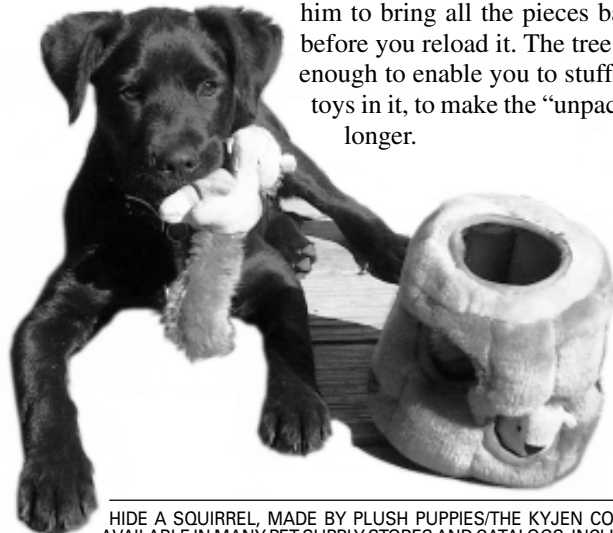
We're also fans of time-consuming puzzle toys that require the dog's owner to participate in the fun. Truly interactive toys require (and inspire!) the dog to *think* as he learns how to operate the toy – and how to work to complete a task with several steps. It may sound trivial, but this sort of game *can* actually help a dog "learn how to learn," by getting rewarded for his persistence and innovation.

Most of the products in this category are made out of fabric and contain small parts with squeakers in them. Unlike the chew-resistant toy described above, these toys should not be left with an unattended dog, since they can be easily chewed up.

Our favorite toy in this "interactive toy" category is the **Hide A Squirrel**, made by Plush Puppies/The Kyjen Company. A stuffed hollow tree holds three little stuffed squirrels (with squeakers). Some dogs grasp the concept of this toy immediately; others may require a step-by-step introduction. At first, simply let your dog play with the squeaky squirrels, and even have him fetch them a few times. Then, stuff them into the "tree." Hold the tree and encourage him to sniff and then pull the squirrels out of the "knotholes" provided.

Once he gets how to do it, you can find myriad ways to extend

the game. Try throwing the loaded tree across the room and watching him wrestle the squirrels out, and then ask him to bring all the pieces back to you before you reload it. The tree is also big enough to enable you to stuff additional toys in it, to make the "unpacking" take longer.



HIDE A SQUIRREL, MADE BY PLUSH PUPPIES/THE KYJEN COMPANY. \$7.50. AVAILABLE IN MANY PET SUPPLY STORES AND CATALOGS, INCLUDING VALLEY VET SUPPLY, VALLEYVET.COM OR (800) 419-9524

Our experience with **Comfort Zone** Canine Behavior Modification Plug-In led us to estimate that as many as two out of three anxious dogs may improve somewhat under its influence. This plug-in atomizer emits a substance dubbed "dog appeasing pheromone" ("DAP" for short), synthetically formulated to mimic pheromones produced by canine nursing mothers and purported to reduce any dog's stress-related barking, elimination, whining, anxiety, fear, chewing, and other stress-related behaviors.

Training Editor Pat Miller tested the DAP atomizer on her pack, hoping to reduce the compulsive guarding behavior of her Scottie, her Cattle Dog-mix's thunder phobia, and her Kelpie's typical herding dog's control-freak behavior. She found it definitely eased the thunder-phobic's reaction to storms and relaxed the Scottie, but saw no difference in the Kelpie's behavior.

Miller also asked members of her trainers' on-line discussion list about their experiences with the product. She received 42 responses, with 64.3 percent reporting positive results; 30.9 percent reporting no observable behavior change; and 4.8 percent reporting negative results.

While not a panacea for all dogs, DAP seems to have a positive effect on enough dogs to test it on your stressed-out dog as a worthwhile adjunct to a behavior modification program.



COMFORT ZONE, MADE BY FARNAM PET PRODUCTS. \$25 - \$30; REFILLS \$16. WIDELY AVAILABLE IN PET SUPPLY STORES AND CATALOGS.

safety

When we examined car safety harnesses for dogs (“Seat Belt Your Dog,” February 2004), we were not completely satisfied with any of the models we tested. None of the models seemed to be designed and manufactured so as to provide equal measures of safety *and* comfort for the dog. To select the best product for your dog, you need to take into account your driving habits (average speed and route when driving with the dog; freeway driving or just tooling around town?) and your dog’s size and passenger style (is he a big dog who likes to lean into the windshield? A little dog who likes to bounce across the back seat from window to window?).



If your greatest need is to secure a heavy dog, or to prevent a dog from getting launched through the car in a worst-case high-speed accident, we’d suggest **The Roadie** (pictured at left), a super heavy-duty nylon harness with reinforced stitching and lab-tested components.

If your requirements are more casual – to confine a distracting, restless dog to a smaller territory in the back seat, for example, or to prevent a small or medium-sized dog from getting thrown into the dashboard or onto the floor in a lower-speed accident – we prefer the **Universal Car Harness** (right), which is much easier to put on and take off the dog, but considerably less sturdy than The Roadie.



THE ROADIE, MADE BY RUFF RIDER PRODUCTS. \$30 FOR THE ROADIE “BASIC” (WHICH WE REVIEWED); \$60 FOR THE “LX” MODEL WITH SHEEPSKIN LINING. (720) 249-2986 OR RUFFRIDER.COM

UNIVERSAL CAR HARNESS, SOLD BY J-B PET SUPPLIES. \$11 - \$17. (800) 526-0388 OR JBPET.COM



A vet scans a puppy and reads its identification microchip.

We discussed implantable identification **microchips** (“Collar, Tag, and ‘Chip’”) in the August issue. It would have been nice if we could have identified a clear winner in the microchip wars, so we could recommend one type of microchip to all dog owners. However, there are several companies competing to gain market dominance in the U.S. and Canada, with each promoting its own type of chip and, more importantly, the scanners that detect and read the chips. These scanners are generally provided by their makers, free of charge, to shelters and animal control agencies. The promise of the microchip implanted in *your* dog may go unrealized if your local shelter does not have (or does not use) the corresponding scanner.

Nevertheless, we strongly suggest that you have your dog implanted with a microchip anyway, because it increases your dog’s odds of being returned to you if he’s lost without his collar. When the system works, it’s near-miraculous. We’ve heard stories about dogs who were returned to their owners thousands of miles and even decades from where and when they were lost.

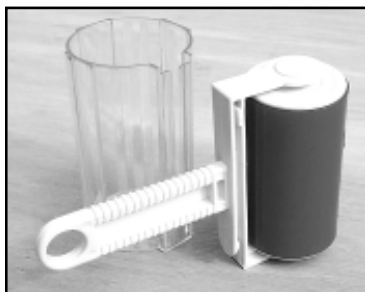
To better the odds, find out which scanners are used by the shelters in your area. If there is a mix, lobby your local animal control agencies to either agree on a common model, or use every available scanner on incoming dogs. Register the microchip with its maker’s recommended registry, and update your contact information with the registry every time you move or your phone number changes. But mostly, keep a collar and current ID on your dog at all times.

accessories

Someday, I swear, I’m going to have a Standard Poodle, no cats, and a pet-hair-free wardrobe, sofa, and car. In the meantime, I surround myself with devices that remove pet hair from everything except the pets. The *one* device I cannot live without is Evercare’s **Pet Hair Pic-Up**, a tape-based roller, similar to a paint roller covered with sheets of *very* sticky masking tape. I have one in my car and my gym bag, and several sprinkled throughout the house. When a sheet gets covered, you rip it off, like layers off an onion, until you need a refill.



However, if I’m going to take on a big hair-removal job, such as the sofa or my fleece jacket after a trip to the dog park, I use a more economical roller, the (almost) endlessly reusable **Tacky Pick-Up** made by Classic Products. This roller is covered with some sort of mushy, sticky material that grabs hair (and lint, dust, loose threads, etc.) until it is covered. Then you just rinse it under the tap; when you rub it under plain old water, the hair and lint washes free and you can keep rolling to your heart’s content.



PET HAIR PIC-UP, MADE BY THE EVERCARE COMPANY. \$3.20; REFILLS FOR \$2.70. AVAILABLE IN MANY PET SUPPLY STORES AND CATALOGS. WE PURCHASED FROM CARE-A-LOT PET SUPPLY, (800) 343-7680 OR CAREALOTPETS.COM

TACKY PICK-UP, MADE BY CLASSIC PRODUCTS. \$4. AVAILABLE IN MANY PET SUPPLY STORES AND CATALOGS. WE PURCHASED FROM CARE-A-LOT PET SUPPLY, (800) 343-7680 OR CAREALOTPETS.COM

Nothing constitutes a non-life-threatening canine “emergency” as much as an encounter with a skunk. No one whose dog has come into his or her home covered in fresh skunk spray will dispute how urgent the response must be, nor how deeply despair can take hold of one’s heart during the recovery process.

Our gratefulness knew no bounds when we learned about **Nature’s Miracle Skunk Odor Remover**, a commercial product found on the shelves of most pet supply stores. It is easy to use – simply saturate the dog with the watery substance and allow him or her to dry. The safe, natural, nontoxic enzymes in the product are able to neutralize the odor in one, or at the most, two applications. Anyone living with a dog in skunk territory should have a quart or two ready. 🐾



NATURE’S MIRACLE SKUNK ODOR REMOVER, MADE BY EIGHT IN ONE PET PRODUCTS. \$10.50. AVAILABLE IN MOST PET SUPPLY STORES; CALL (877) 880-8855 FOR LOCATIONS

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WHAT'S AHEAD

Tour of the Dog

Holistic veterinarian Randy Kidd explores the dog's respiratory system.

Scents-Ability

Training Editor

Pat Miller explores all the things a dog can do for us using his superior sense of smell. Plus, how to make your dog's nose work for you!

Broken Wagger

How "Limber Tail Syndrome" can affect your long-tailed dog – and how he can get his wag back.

What a Wolf Eats

Proponents of raw diets often draw on presumptions about the diet of the wolf to justify their approach. We examine the wolf diet – and whether it is an appropriate model for our dogs.

What Promotes Bloat?

So much conflicting information has been disseminated about this life-threatening health emergency . . . WDJ offers straight talk about how to prevent and treat bloat.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of two books: *The Power of Positive Dog Training* and the brand-new *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*. Both books are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Dog Care and *Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care* are published by Storey Books, (800) 441-5700 or storeybooks.com

Ruffing It: A Complete Guide to Camping With Dogs by Mardi Richmond (Alpine Pubs, 1998), is also available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com. Puotinen is also author of several books about human health including *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains*, available from your favorite bookseller.

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) has references to member trainers in your area. Write to PO Box 1781, Hobbs, NM 88241, call (800) 738-3647, or view its database of trainers at apdt.com

Pat Miller, CPDT, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Hagerstown, Maryland. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, Rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Call her at (301) 582-9420 or see peaceablepaws.com

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), 2214 Old Emmorton Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

ATTENTION, BUSINESS OWNERS!

In response to a number of requests from dog-related businesses, including veterinarians, pet supply stores, groomers, and trainers, our publisher has a new program that will enable businesses to buy copies of WDJ in bulk for reselling to their customers.

If you are the owner of a dog-related business, and you would be interested in buying copies of WDJ for your customers each month (at a special price), contact Dean Lage at dlage@belvoir.com or (941) 929-1720.

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