

Is Your Dog an Herbalist?



Dogs have a shorter and different digestive system than do humans. Always check with a natural or holistic vet before giving Fido herbal remedies.

Natural home remedies for your alternatively inclined pooch.

By Lucy Postins

tipbit

Always discuss any home treatment plans with your veterinarian, ideally one who is familiar with holistic approaches to health.

There are many cases in which expert veterinary attention is absolutely vital for Fido's health and well-being, but there are also some situations when a natural store-bought or home remedy can provide an excellent complement to more conventional care. Of course the correct diagnosis is a must, and any time there is doubt, a consultation with a vet is the only responsible way forward. Once a diagnosis is made, however, a holistic or integrative approach may be appropriate. A selection of common remedies are offered here that may be found at home, or that can be purchased from a natural food store, that may be useful tools in a holistic approach to total health.

Skin & Coat

The causes of skin and coat problems may range from a food intolerance (usually grains) to contact allergies (sensitivity to floor cleaners, laundry detergents or upholstery protectors for example) or a medical problem such as a thyroid condition.

Using natural home cleaning products

and **fragrance-free detergents**, as well as refraining from spraying anything in your yard for a month or two, can help if the problem is a contact allergy.

Supplementation with essential fatty acids is excellent for the skin and coat. **Flax, coconut, olive, safflower and fish oils** contain a wealth of Omega fatty acids that support healthy skin and coat.

Herbs that promote normal skin function include **nettle, dandelion and burdock**. You can buy these in dry herb form to make a tea for Fido, or use herbal tinctures. **Seaweed** is also rich in many trace minerals, vitamins, amino acids and other compounds that are essential for the skin as well as healthy thyroid function.

Bumps, Bruises & Strains

The homeopathic remedy **arnica** is the top homeopathic remedy for these ailments. It helps to alleviate pain and promote healing. You can give this orally and also apply it topically to the affected area (but not to broken skin). Homeopathic **hypericum** is useful for nerve pain.

Vitamins E & C have natural anti-inflammatory properties, and can be added directly to the food when injuries have occurred.

A gentle massage with **lavender** essential oil diluted in a carrier oil, such as grape-seed, can be very soothing for sprains and spasms.

Digestive Upset

A digestive disturbance is often caused by food or other consumed substances. Dirty water, household objects or substances not intended for digestion often take their toll, especially on younger pups who like to taste everything as they investigate their world.

Slippery Elm is one of the most valuable herbs for GI upset; it soothes and protects and helps to regulate the system. **Plantain** and **fennel** are useful herbs to try. You can make a tea or "slurry" with any of these herbs and add them directly to Fido's food.

A teaspoon of **honey** may help trigger the appetite in finicky, anorexic dogs as well as those suffering from GI upset. Live culture plain **yogurt** is excellent for the digestive tract and essential if you have to administer antibiotics, which can play havoc with the good bacteria that reside in the gut.

For acute conditions such as sudden diarrhea, the homeopathic remedy **arsenicum album** can work wonders. Homeopathic **ippecacuanha** is useful for vomiting and nausea. Gassiness can be relieved with homeopathic **carbo vegetabilis**, and this has even been used successfully for bloat, as an interim remedy on the way to the emergency vet. ⓘ

🌿 Bonus material, *Calming Agents for Dogs with Fear and Anxiety*, available online! Connect to www.FIDOfriendly.com/health-wellness/herbs.



ANXIETY: RESCUE A RAMPED-UP ROVER

NO NEED TO BE STRESSED OUT. TRY A NATURAL SOLUTION.

Bach's Rescue Remedy is a wonderful natural solution to stress and emotional upset. A few drops can be applied directly to the tongue or to drinking water, to restore calm. A tea made from chamomile is also very soothing for nervous, irritable or upset animals. It can be added directly to the food. Lavender essential oil can also have a calming effect when applied to bedding or mixed with a carrier oil and applied directly to the coat. samples@nelsonbach.com