

Alternative/Holistic Veterinary Medicine

Many of us are hearing more about and becoming interested in alternative forms of medicine for humans. Likewise, many pet owners are weighing the benefits of providing non-traditional modalities of treatment for our animals. Interestingly enough, a declining economy and the need to save money wherever possible always drive an increased awareness of and search for viable alternative approaches to traditional medicine.

Western medicine is science based and research driven and often seems to prohibit the expanded use of alternative therapies because there is little statistical proof that they work. Most nontraditional treatments require time and are very slow in showing some improvement. Most often they are employed when customary protocols seem to be failing. That makes holistic medicine somewhat of an afterthought. A clear understanding of and willingness to study alternative medicine by practitioners is difficult, and access to meaningful resources is limited.

Many of my clients ask me whether or not they should incorporate nontraditional treatment with standard western medicine for their pets. My answer is always a resounding YES! My years of study have given me a clear understanding of the disease process. I believe that any treatment, especially treatment for chronic diseases, must combine very specialized drug intervention with the need to address the interconnectivity of various malfunctions of parts of the whole body. Thus, there is a definite place for alternative medicine with its philosophy of bringing the whole body into "balance." The danger lies in knowing how, when, and with what can these two approaches be used to help, not harm, the ailing animal. Sometimes "natural" components of treatment protocols interact and change the absorption, activation, or delivery of certain medicines.

Modalities like acupuncture, acupressure, and other forms of physical therapy have clearly demonstrated that they can contribute to a faster recovery mode for both pets and people. I do recommend searching for practitioners who embrace all aspects of healing. The best are broadminded and open to involving you, your pet and the veterinary team in a multifactorial approach to helping our beloved pets recover and live truly happy lives.