



Homeopathy for Dogs and Cats

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Homeopathy, is a specific form of alternative (holistic) medicine which was developed by Samuel Hahnemann, M.D., a German physician, in the late eighteenth century. At that time, people were being treated with poisonous substances to get the “bad humours” out of them by making them vomit, have diarrhea, sweat, salivate, and bleed. Many patients died from these treatments.

Dr. Hahnemann felt such practices were barbaric, and he stopped practicing medicine. While making a living translating books, he came across William Cullen’s write-up on the action of *Cinchona officinalis*, the herb used to make quinine for the treatment of malaria. Dr. Hahnemann disagreed with Cullen’s assertion that it was the astringency of the herb that had the effect, and, to prove his point, took a small amount of the bark himself. He developed symptoms of malaria lasting a few hours. Dr. Hahnemann repeated the experiment several times, each time developing symptoms that went away by the next day.

From this research, Dr. Hahnemann developed the Law of Similars, derived from an ancient concept used by Galen, Hippocrates, and Paracelsus. When a healthy individual is made ill in a particular way by being exposed to a substance, that individual may also be cured by being treated with the same substance. Practitioners using Dr. Hahnemann’s homeopathic system are called classical homeopaths.

Many people mistakenly believe that the words holistic and homeopathic are interchangeable. This is not true. Homeopathy is a 200-year-old system of healing that uses remedies based on the Law of Similars, which is the reverse of the allopathic, or conventional, medical system. Allopathic drugs act in such a way that they suppress symptoms, but in themselves, they don’t necessarily cure disease. However, when used appropriately, homeopathy works with the body, not against it, promoting actual curing and not just suppressing symptoms. Homeopathic remedies stimulate the immune system, enabling it to complete the job it was already trying to do on its own.

When in crisis, the human body, as well as that of the canine or feline, speaks to us through its symptoms. Symptoms, produced by the body’s attempt to heal, are windows to the internal process that should not be closed. All the symptoms, taken together, are referred to as the symptomatic picture.

LAW OF OPPOSITES, LAW OF SIMILARS

Allopathic, or conventional, medicine usually applies the Law of Opposites to the treatment of disease. The medication prescribed by the doctor or veterinarian acts against the patient's symptoms, as described by such names as antibiotic and anti-inflammatory. Allopathic drugs typically suppress symptoms but do not necessarily cure disease.

The Law of Similars means that the remedy that causes certain symptoms in a healthy person will cure the same symptoms in a sick person. For example, a bee sting (from the honeybee, *apis mellifica*) causes an area of swelling and redness in normal individuals. The swelling may be accompanied by itching and burning, which feel better from the application of cold, and the person isn't thirsty. In homeopathic dilutions, the remedy *apis mellifica* cures itchy, burning, red swellings that come on suddenly and are relieved by cold compresses, especially when the individual is less thirsty than usual.

The red swelling doesn't have to have been caused by a bee sting in order for *apis mellifica* to be an effective remedy; it just needs to fit the same symptom picture. It may have been caused by something completely unrelated, such as sunburn, allergy, vaccinations, or drugs.

MINIMUM DOSE

Another main principle of homeopathy is the Minimum Dose. Homeopathic remedies are prepared by dilution and succussion, which is a particular way of mixing. They are so diluted that individual molecules of the original substance are extremely difficult to detect in samples. This allows remedies to be made from highly toxic substances, such as arsenic, snake venom, or the saliva of a rabid dog.

So, how does a remedy work if there virtually isn't anything there? When the mother remedy is made, the substance is mixed with water and succussed. This causes the water to receive an energetic imprint. Some might call it a ghost, a spirit, or even a memory. Science hasn't yet discovered or explained how homeopathy works.

The concept of minimum dose means that the more diluted the remedy is (in other words the less substance it actually contains), the more powerful it becomes, and the higher "potency" it is.

OUTCOMES OF HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT

The principles of homeopathy state that there are three possible outcomes of any treatment: suppression, palliation, and cure.

SUPPRESSION rids the body of specific symptoms, but it drives the disease into other channels by denying the body's expression of the original disease. For example, a skin tumor develops that is itchy and eventually opens and drains. The allopathic vet may decide to remove the tumor and may not consider that this was the body's choice of a location to push toxins out. After surgery, the wound heals, and the skin looks great. The

most troubling symptom is gone. Over time, however, the cat, dog or other life form, may experience a change in temperament (groucher or more aggressive), or he may develop a more serious condition, such as thyroid disease or liver cancer. Since removing the original symptom, the patient has gotten very sick at a deeper level. It's like plugging the outlet of a volcano. It gets hotter and hotter inside until it explodes at a deeper, more dangerous level and causes much more destruction than it might have otherwise.

PALLIATION means to alleviate symptoms through medicine, such as treating pain through aspirin. With palliation, the medicine needs to be repeated frequently. Palliation makes symptoms go away almost immediately (even if they've been present or recurring for years). A dog or cat may, for instance, temporarily stop crying when urinating, but the symptoms will soon return—in hours, days, or even far longer periods. Repeated dosing of a remedy, herb, or drug during palliation is a perpetual cycle to keep the symptoms away. The dog or cat is not getting healthier and, in fact, is slowly getting sicker overall.

CURE, the goal of homeopathy, means that the body eliminates the whole disease, not just symptoms, and rises to a state of optimum health. Health is defined as not just the absence of symptoms, but a feeling of well being and vitality. A cure in classical homeopathy is more than just making the symptoms go away, which can happen with many kinds of treatments. Rather, it's when the symptoms go away and stay away permanently. The dog or cat feels, and is, healthy in every respect. They may still get minor ailments, but recovers quickly from them with very little or no treatment. By treating only symptoms and not the whole individual, allopathic, or conventional, medicine tends to be limited to the first two outcomes: suppression and palliation.

HOW HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES ARE PREPARED

Today homeopathic remedies are still prepared according to guidelines given by Samuel Hahnemann, M.D., in *The Organon of the Healing Art* (1810). If possible, an alcohol tincture is made (some substances are not soluble in alcohol and are prepared differently). Dilution and succussion (shaking) of the tincture produce a potentized homeopathic remedy.

The level of dilution of a remedy is denoted with Roman numerals.

One drop of the mother tincture diluted with nine drops of alcohol (or other solvent) creates a potency of 1X (as in X, the Roman numeral for ten).

Similarly, 1 drop of the mother tincture diluted with 99 drops of alcohol creates a potency of 1C (as in C, the Roman numeral for 100).

Higher potencies exist as well, such as M and LM. By the time a potency of 12C is reached, the dilution is beyond Avogadro's number (6.023×10^{23} , or 602,300,000,000,000,000,000,000), which in physical chemistry means that virtually nothing poisonous or toxic is left, no matter what the remedy has been made from.

IS A CURE ALWAYS POSSIBLE?

Through homeopathy, which most conventional veterinarians are not trained in, a real cure to most chronic diseases can be achieved in many cases where allopathic medicine offers only a quick (and often temporary) fix—if it has anything to offer at all. Homeopathy works particularly well for feline health problems, because cats are subtle creatures and highly sensitive to energy. However, all animals respond well and there are many practitioners that specialize in horses and dogs, also. Homeopathic practitioners all over the world work with all aspects of human health care, homeopathically.

Homeopathic remedies are quite easy to administer and they encourage the body to help it heal itself.

If your dog or cat has undergone long-term allopathic drug therapy, homeopathy may not work immediately. With persistence it may help restore the dogs or cat's health in cases in which conventional veterinarians might even recommend euthanasia. In the process of attempting a cure, very ill animals may at least feel better even if they can't be cured.

HOW A DISEASE RUNS ITS COURSE

In homeopathy, a cure is obtained by giving the substance whose experimental symptoms in healthy individuals are most similar to the patient's own symptoms. Since this therapy is based on an individual's total symptomatic picture, you must learn the characteristics of each remedy, observe carefully all the symptoms your dog or cat is now exhibiting and has exhibited in the past, and understand his or her general characteristics.

Diseases tend to follow a predictable pattern. Here are the stages of disease:

ENERGETIC IMBALANCE: Your cat seems to be getting sick; there aren't any symptoms, but you just know something's wrong.

FUNCTIONAL CHANGES: For example, your cat is going frequently to the litter box, but there's no straining and the urinalysis is normal. If the disturbance is treated right away, even severe symptoms may resolve quickly or be avoided. At this point, a conventional veterinarian may not be able to diagnose the problem. Dogs may exhibit a similar behavior by asking to go out frequently but again no straining and urin test is normal.

INFLAMMATION: If the disturbance remains untreated, inflammation shows that the body is trying its hardest to rebalance itself. At this stage the dog or cat is sick, often with fever, redness, and swellings.

PATHOLOGY: Finally, the body tries to ward off the problem by moving into pathology, such as bladder stones; thick, hairless skin; or fluid accumulation in abdomen or chest. Once this stage has been reached, a cure takes longer to achieve. The dog or cat must work his or her way back through the previous stages of the disease: inflammation, functional changes, and energetic imbalance. This is why it often seems as though the dog or cat is worsening before improving. When a chronically ill dog or cat is given an

appropriate remedy, there will often be an immediate mental and emotional response of contentment, even though the final “physical” cure may take much longer.

WORKING WITH A HOMEOPATHIC PRACTITIONER

Never attempt to use homeopathy on your own to treat your cat. Always work with a homeopathic practitioner and preferably a veterinarian well trained in homeopathy. Because, selecting the right remedy in the right potency at the right time is not a simple process, and assessing the progress of the case takes training and experience.

Beginning homeopathic treatment may also seem expensive, but the costs are nearly all up front. Over time, you’ll spend less money than you would have with conventional care and its repeated tests and treatments.

Your first appointment with a veterinary homeopath is likely to take an hour or more. He’ll or she will ask a lot of questions; some of which might seem irrelevant at first. In prescribing homeopathic remedies, the smallest details help the homeopath understand the dog or cat’s personality, which will help your practitioner distinguish among remedies. It is helpful for guardians to keep a journal of symptoms as homeopathic treatment progresses. Here are some questions to consider.

1. How does your dog or cat react to situations, people, other animals, noise, and other stimuli?
2. Does your dog or cat seek warmth under your covers or lie on the carpet or cool, hard surfaces?
3. How much water does your dog or cat drink?
4. Does your cat like dry, soft, or soupy foods?
5. How does your dog or cat interact with other dogs or cats in the house?
6. Is your cat the boss or the low cat on the totem pole?

A homeopath makes a list of all past and present symptoms, as well as of the individual’s unique characteristics. The homeopath asks about every body system and what makes each symptom better or worse. He looks for changes in symptom pictures and tries to discover a cause for the changes (for example, symptoms started after the dog or cat’s human companions divorced). Your practitioner will also look for characteristic symptoms (those symptoms that aren’t normally associated with the disease). For example, everyone with the flu feels tired and achy, but characteristic symptoms might be feeling better from being consoled, worse from exposure to an open window, or better from having only cold drinks.

In many cases, this is the point where you and your animal companion will go home.

Later, the homeopath looks up the most important and unique characteristics (and this takes experienced judgment) in a repertory containing tens of thousands of symptoms along with the remedies known to help each symptom. By cross-referencing the most important symptoms and traits, the homeopath comes up with the two to five best potential remedies.

Next, the homeopath compares his choices in a materia medica, which is a book containing in-depth descriptions of each remedy. He or she makes a selection and provides the remedy to you.

WAITING FOR A TRUE CURE

Be patient! A true cure takes time. Once a remedy is given, you must be vigilant about observing changes in your dog or cat's symptoms, attitude, and any other signs or patterns the homeopath may ask you to watch. Keeping a journal is extremely helpful, noting observations and remedies along with the date, time of day, weather conditions, and any unusual stressors the dog or cat has been exposed to. The homeopath will ask you to report back as things happen or at specified time periods; be sure to stick to the schedule.

The most common instruction you will hear from a classical homeopath is "Wait." Each remedy must be allowed to complete its work; for high potency remedies, a month or more is the minimum. Day-to-day changes should be noted in your journal, but try to see the bigger healing trends that are occurring. You will check in with the homeopath at intervals so that he or she can assess the case and make sure that the remedy is acting to cure, not to palliate or suppress.

When a homeopathic remedy is given, the energy field of the body immediately starts to react. In the first couple of days, the dog or cat may seem to feel better, even if symptoms haven't changed. Three to five days after the remedy has been given, a response will usually be noticeable. This may look like current symptoms getting worse, older symptoms returning, or new symptoms arising—yet the dog or cat clearly has better energy, a better appetite, or just looks more like his old self. An aggravation or healing crisis is a good sign; the body is being jolted into starting to heal itself. (Of course, if the symptoms get much worse and the dog or cat is clearly feeling sicker, call your homeopath immediately for instructions; the remedy is not acting curatively and may need to be changed.)

When the aggravation or healing crisis occurs, it is critical to wait and not use another homeopathic remedy. You can make your cat more comfortable with other gentle treatments, such as massage, herbs, flower remedies, EFT Tapping, and Reiki.

Most animal companions have been instructed by their holistic veterinarian, or practitioner, who practices homeopathy in the "how to's" of the preparation of a home made, organic, species specific raw diet, with proper supplementation, including omega -3's which reduces inflammation that quite naturally occurs during the disease process itself and it's healing crisis. Proper nutrition and stress reduction, will always assist the

homeopathic remedy to help the body heal itself. As a practitioner, I wouldn't consider practicing homeopathy without also using nutritional and nutraceutical support, as well.

Over time, you will most likely see the symptoms slowly start to lessen. Again, the length of time needed for a cure is proportional to the length and depth of an illness and the amount of prior inappropriate treatment received, no matter if they were allopathic, homeopathic, herbal, or other. Cures take time and patience, and they often require several remedies over months or years. Patience is the key.

NOTE: If your dog or cat is experiencing serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, you may need to get your animal companion to emergency allopathic care, such as at a veterinary emergency facility. As soon as possible, let your homeopathic practitioner know what treatment your dog or cat received. For example, if your dog or cat develops a life-threatening asthma attack on Saturday, he or she might need steroids as this is a life-threatening condition where emergency medicine may be a life-saving solution. But if you panic during a healing crisis with a dog or cat already under homeopathic care and use allopathic treatment or give a homeopathic remedy on your own, you can create a difficult knot for your homeopath to untangle. It's challenging to decipher what requires emergency treatment and the use of western medicine and what is an acceptable level of crisis reaction. You should discuss this with your homeopath, in order to be prepared as to what you might expect, but when the moment arrives, only you can make that decision. A healing crisis and a true emergency may look quite a bit alike and it will always be better to err on the side of caution.

It pays to be prepared, however. And homeopathy can be used to great advantage in first-aid situations for acute injuries or illness. You may want to keep a homeopathic kit on hand for emergencies in 30C potencies. Study it carefully and have a basic understanding on how to use emergency homeopathic. Jean Hofve, DVM and I have included the basic emergency remedies and instructions in their use in our book, *The Complete Guide to Holistic Cat Care*, which will of course be instructional and benefit dog companions, as well.

Talk with your homeopathic practitioner in advance of an emergency for additional information and remedies in your individual case to know how and when to use the recommended remedies properly.

Homeopathy is complex, and you can do serious harm with inappropriate remedies. Don't take chances with your precious animal companions' life. It's best to work with a holistic veterinarian who is trained in small animal homeopathy, either in person or by phone, to select the right remedy, potency, and schedule of administration.

If you're seeking a homeopathic practitioner in addition to your conventional vet, be aware that many conventional veterinarians will welcome your search for another way to heal your dog or cat. Other veterinarians may be threatened by new approaches, or feel they're not appropriate. Just be honest and, if you can, enroll them as your partner in healing but if you are not comfortable with the response you get, find another veterinarian who is open to homeopathy and alternative adjunct therapies.

DOSAGES

Homeopathic remedies are available in tablets and granules (pellets). Because the size of the animal isn't important, the dosage is the same for dogs and cats as it is for humans. The potency selected and how frequently it's given are more important than the amount given. If your dog or cat doesn't swallow a complete dose (for example exactly three pellets), he or she will still get the benefit. Your homeopath will help you determine a proper dosage schedule.

It's best to give homeopathic remedies on an empty stomach. However, if necessary, the remedy may be given in a small amount (approximately 1 teaspoon) of organic raw milk or raw cream or in organic, raw species specific food.

If your dog or cat hates being "pilled," it's easier to dissolve the remedy in water and administer it with an eyedropper. Here's how to make up a liquid remedy.

1. Add the prescribed number of pellets or tablets to 1 ounce (28 ml) distilled water in a sterilized amber or cobalt glass dosage bottle. (Dark colored glass prevents light damage.)
2. Shake the bottle vigorously against your hand one hundred times. This process is called succussing, and it helps distribute the remedy throughout the water. Pellets may take a long time to dissolve, but the remedy will be present in the water immediately.
3. Give a few drops by mouth.

No Expiration Date is necessary even though one is provided on the package.

Homeopathic remedies don't seem to lose their effectiveness unless they are stored improperly. Remedies one hundred years old have been used successfully! Just be sure to store your remedies away from sunlight, heat, strong odors, microwaves, motors, electrical equipment, and disinfecting agents.

Homeopathy is an exciting journey of discovery to embark upon for your own health care, as well as your companion animals.