

Even Some Traditional Vets Know About These 3 Healing Foods – Do You?

Thanks to Dr. Google, vets are starting to hear about this witch's brew of functional foods from their patients, even though holistic vets have used them for years.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Conventional veterinarians are beginning to take an interest in pet nutrition, and specifically, functional foods
- This is in part because pet parents are doing their own Internet research, and bringing questions about healing foods and supplements to their veterinarian's attention
- Golden paste, made from turmeric, is one such healing food with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties
- Bone broth is tummy-soothing nourishment, rich in vitamins and minerals with potent healing properties
- Medicinal mushrooms, another functional food that also comes in supplement form, provides potent immune system support

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According to Dr. Heather Lewellen, writing for veterinary journal dvm360 (which caters primarily to the conventional veterinary community), there are some new "hot and brewing" functional foods being used by the holistic veterinary community to treat disease.¹

Needless to say, I was eager to learn more about these "culinary curiosities." I always chuckle when I read about "new" natural trends in veterinary medicine. Natural substances aren't new — they're of the Earth, after all.

Most have been around forever and have been used effectively by holistic healers for ages, but Western medicine tends to view them as the latest fad.

"The direction in which new dietary therapies become widespread used to be from doctor to veterinary client," says Lewellen, "but Dr. Google has had her hand in a significant change, and now the direction is increasingly from consumer to medical advisor."

Translation: More and more pet guardians are arriving at their veterinarian's office armed with information and questions about natural nutritional therapies.

For the record, conventional medicine practitioners have a real problem with "Dr. Google," which is code for the health information people uncover when they do Internet research. Some of what's out there in cyberspace is helpful and useful; some is not.

But a question medical professionals might want to ask themselves is, 'Why are so many clients consulting the Internet before or instead of consulting me?'

"Many of your clients are adopting these therapies themselves and then for their pets," continues Lewellen.

"Many will not even think to tell you that they have done so or ask your opinion. So when they do tell or ask you, you can gain instant 'medical rock star' status if you are familiar with the latest functional foods."

Another question veterinary professionals might ask themselves is, "Why aren't we taught more about animal nutrition in vet school? And why are we being taught by representatives from the processed pet food industry?" Or how about, "Why don't I learn on my own about the role of nutrition in pet health?"

Anyway, let's take a look at the "witch's brew" of functional foods mentioned in the article, namely turmeric (golden paste), bone broth and medicinal mushrooms.

Golden Paste (Made With Turmeric)

Golden paste has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, and is used in human medicine to prevent arthritis and cancer.

In veterinary medicine, holistic and integrative practitioners use it to treat dogs with arthritis, cancer and other chronic inflammatory diseases. Golden paste is quite tasty to most dogs. The recipe (including my tweaks) is:

- 1/2 cup organic powdered turmeric
- 1 cup filtered water
- 1/3 cup ethically sourced, organic coconut oil
- 1/2 to 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper (increases bioavailability)

Dosage typically ranges from 1/4 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon daily, depending on the dog's size and the condition being treated.

Dogs that should not be given turmeric include those scheduled for surgery, those with gallbladder disease, diabetes, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), hormone-sensitive tumors and problems absorbing iron.

You can also supplement your dog's (or cat's) diet with plain turmeric, as all mammals can potentially benefit from this healing spice. Most pets readily accept a little seasoning on their meals. My pets, including my birds, do fine with the fresh root grated over their food.

If you want to dramatically increase the amount of biologically available curcumin in your pet's diet, you'll need to go with a supplement. I recommend a high-quality, organic turmeric product, given as follows:

- **Cats** — 100 milligrams twice a day
- **Small to medium-sized dogs** — 250 milligrams twice a day
- **Large to giant breeds** — 500 milligrams two to three times a day

As always, you'll want to discuss the exact amounts needed for your individual pet with your holistic veterinarian.

Bone Broth

Bone broth is an excellent bioavailable source of vitamins, minerals and nitrogen, with potent healing properties. It can help relieve joint and stomach pain, and supports the immune system.

Bone broth is also a great after-fasting food for animals recovering from gastrointestinal (GI) irritation or illness. If you have a finicky pet, you can use it as a topper on food. If you have an older pet with a declining appetite, feeding bone broth provides very concentrated nourishment and helps keep the GI tract functioning.

My dogs and cats love bone broth. In the following video, I demonstrate my method for making bone broth using organic chicken. I made a batch for my dog Ada, who was coming off a 24-hour fast after a bout of GI inflammation, vomiting and diarrhea.

Medicinal Mushrooms

According to integrative veterinarian Dr. Susan Wynn:

*"There are an estimated [3] to [5] million species of fungi, and more than 100 species are found in modern Chinese pharmacopeias. The turkey tail mushroom (*Trametes versicolor*) extract, polysaccharide-K (PSK), has undergone more human clinical trials than any other compound."*²

Wynn also provides an impressive list of the many properties of medicinal mushrooms, including:

- Antitumor
- Antibacterial
- Antidiabetic
- Immune system modulation
- Antiparasitic
- Herbicidal
- Antioxidant
- Antifungal
- Nematicidal
- Cardiovascular benefits
- Anti-inflammatory

- Antiallergic
- Antihypercholesterolemic
- Detoxification
- Antinociceptive
- Antiviral, antiphytoviral
- Hepatoprotective

Mushrooms are a fungus that forms a fleshy, above ground reproductive structure called the "mushroom fruit body," which is the part you can see — the stem and cap. However, the mushroom fruit body is less than 10% of a mushroom's total biomass. The mycelium is the part of the mushroom you don't see or typically eat. It's the part that lies beneath the surface of the soil, and it may hold the most important nutritional benefits of mushrooms.

I regularly use mushroom and mycelium blends in my practice because of the many potential benefits they offer cats and dogs for immune support and overall well-being. I also created a mushroom broth recipe that you can add to your pet's food.

Beta-glucans and proteoglycans are two of several biologically active compounds in mushroom fruit bodies and mycelia that support your pet's immune system. What makes mushroom-derived beta-glucans so unique is their ability to support optimal immune function without over-stimulation.

Mushrooms and their mycelium's complex nutritional matrix of nutrients, dietary fiber and fungal enzymes have also been shown to support healthy digestion and GI tract function.

The digestive enzymes produced by mushrooms can help improve the digestibility and utilization of carbohydrates and proteins in your pet's body. And they're capable of surviving the stomach's harsh, acidic conditions, too. For obvious reasons, these "culinary curiosities," as they are referred to in the journal article, are actually some of my favorite go-to foods and supplements to help prevent and heal disease in my animal patients.

Hopefully your own veterinarian is aware of the tremendous healing potential of natural nutritional remedies and incorporates them into his or her practice. If not, you might want to use the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association's (AHVMA) **VetFinder** tool to locate a holistic or integrative vet in your area.

Sources and References

^{1,2} [dvm360, May 12, 2016](#)
