

Holistic Pet Care

Enriching your pet's life through integrative veterinary care

Nearly half of all Americans use some sort of holistic remedies for their own personal wellbeing, so it's no surprise that many are also turning to holistic pet care for their cats, dogs, birds, horses, and gerbils. We love our furry and feathered friends, and are concerned about the type of veterinary care they are receiving.

As with holistic health care for humans, holistic veterinary medicine stresses the importance of evaluating an animal's whole self—physical health, mental/emotional environment, personality, diet and exercise, and medical history—unlike traditional care that focuses primarily on lab results based on western medicine. Holistic pet care also explores a broader range of treatment options intended to meet all of their needs, physical, mental, and emotional.

But holistic pet care doesn't abandon traditional therapies altogether. Rather, it uses a combination of conventional and complementary therapies in order to achieve optimum health. To understand how all of these pieces fit together, it might be helpful to know a few key terms:

Holistic is generally used to refer to the whole animal, as we've already explained.

Complementary therapy is a term used by practitioners who advocate looking at a broad spectrum of options in order to find the treatment best suited to the individual animal in question. This is often referred to as integrative therapy.

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Alternative therapy is sometimes used to describe non-conventional forms of pet health care, including acupuncture, chiropractics, homeopathy, behavior therapy, nutritional support, and so on. It should be noted, however, that practitioners in these fields don't consider their therapies “alternatives.”

Pet owners choose complementary pet care for a variety of reasons. Some look to acupuncture or chiropractics to treat an illness that otherwise seems untreatable. Others contend that, in the long run, holistic pet care is less expensive than traditional treatments.

For some pet owners, integrative treatments are preferred because they are believed to be safer and less toxic. Still others look to homeopathy because they want to avoid unnecessary side effects of conventional treatments such as antibiotics.

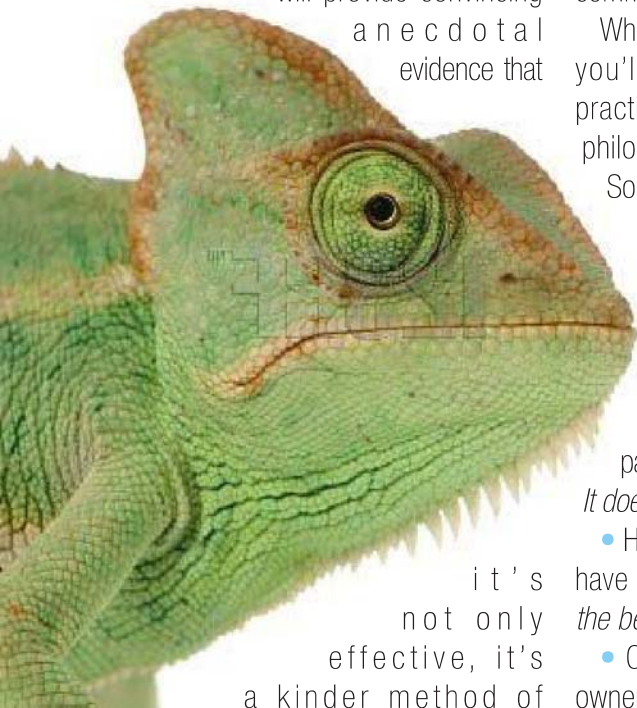
Unfortunately, at this time there have not yet been many large-scale, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies conducted in the various holistic pet care disciplines.

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approaching common and not-so-common animal health care problems.

When looking for a holistic veterinarian, you'll want to interview prospective practitioners to see if their health care philosophies are compatible with yours.

Some questions to consider are:

- What kinds of holistic veterinary care do they offer? *Get specific treatment options (acupuncture, chiropractics, homeopathy, herbal medicine, massage, behavior therapy, etc).*
- Do they have a license for their particular speciality? From what school? *It doesn't hurt to check the school out, too.*
- How many years of experience do they have in their field? *Obviously, the longer the better.*
- Can they give you references from pet owners they've worked with? *Get two or*

three phone numbers and call each one to ask them about their experience. ☺

For ideas on where to find holistic veterinarians, check out the following sites:

1. American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association
2. American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture
3. American Veterinary Chiropractic Association
4. Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy
5. International Veterinary Acupuncture Society
6. The Veterinary Institute of Integrative Medicine

Spay Today

Save a Life Tomorrow

Make an appointment to get your animal friend spayed or neutered today, and urge everyone you know to do the same. Remember, every single stray cat and every neglected dog came from an animal who wasn't spayed or neutered.

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