



HEALTHY, HAPPY PETS: DETOX

By Joyce Belcher

MY INTENT FOR WRITING THIS article is to help all pet owners understand the signs of a pet in need of a detox, whether acute or chronic, subtle or drastic. Most pet owners aren't aware of a health issue until symptoms appear loud and clear. Rashes, skin irritations, yeasty ears, itching and scratching, bald or thin spots, allergies to all sorts of things, runny eyes, diarrhea, kidney and urinary issues (chronic UTI's), pH imbalance, growths, tumors, fur ball issues with cats, all of these are signs that your pets' immune system is out of balance and could benefit from a cleanse of the eliminatory organs. Knowing why and when your pet may need to rid their body of toxins can not only save you a lot of time, money and worry, but may very well save your pets' life.

“Do pets really need to detox?”

The answer is YES! No matter how clean and pure we believe we are, there are always hidden (or visible) toxins that they will come into contact with that can build-up over time to create an overburdening work load for the eliminatory organs. Skin

is the largest organ of elimination so when the “other” organs become overburdened with toxins and are therefore no longer able to function efficiently, our pets' skin can be a tell-tale sign of a much deeper issue.

How toxins affect our pets' overall health Homeostasis is the ability of the body to maintain balance. Toxins disturb the natural flow of homeostasis kicking the immune system into gear for defense against them, creating imbalance and disease. A strong immune system that is not overloaded with toxins can fight this off at first sign, *but...* a weakened immune system with a heavy load of toxins will show symptomatic signs that vary greatly. I have described some of the most commonly used, yet most commonly **unknown** toxins and their effect on our pets' health in this article to help bring awareness of the hidden dangers in daily use products. Endless amounts of money is spent each year in an attempt to find out what is wrong with Fido only to come up with no real diagnosis, but an amazing amount of frustration and no improvement in his health. The need to

be proactive in your pets' health is greater than ever with all the “quick fix” chemicals that are given so freely without a word of caution to the pet owner.... The need for Detox is real *and* necessary.

Secret Toxins?

Our pets' bodies require trace amounts of some heavy metals, including copper, zinc, and others, but can be dangerous at high levels. Other heavy metals such as mercury, lead, arsenic, and cadmium have no known health benefits, and their accumulation over time can cause serious illness and even premature death.

Heavy metals can be found in most chemical pesticides and fertilizers that you may not even be aware you're walking on and into, seeping right into the pads of your pet. For horses they can come by grazing grass and hay that has been treated with chemical pesticides or fertilizer.

Exposure to heavy metals may occur through your pets' food as many commercial diets contain GMO ingredients, from medications, from the environment, or just walking outside in

areas that are sprayed with pesticides and herbicides.

Mercury is one of the most common and dangerous heavy metals, causing health issues that go un or mis-diagnosed regularly. Some vaccines are preserved with Thimerisol or Mercury, a heavy metal. Thimerisol is 49.6% mercury.

Mercury is lipophilic, meaning that it concentrates in fatty tissues, especially in the brain, which is made mostly of fat. The body doesn't easily expel this heavy metal without assistance. Overtime the body can build up toxic levels creating a variety of health issues in our pets that may be difficult to diagnose. A good detox that can help remove heavy metals is necessary to administer up to one week before vaccinations and continue on for 30 days or more afterwards.

Heavy metals are known to catalyze free-radical activity and increase the aging process.

I love Raw Bladderwrack in a blend for removing heavy metals. It's a primary source of alginic acid which is a polysaccharide that is abundant in sea vegetables classified as brown seaweeds. A team led by Dr. Tanaka at McGill University, has demonstrated that alginic acid binds with any heavy metals found in the intestines, renders them indigestible, and causes them to be eliminated. Heavy metals such as barium, cadmium, lead, mercury, zinc, and even radioactive strontium, which may be present in the intestines, will not be absorbed by the body when alginic acid is present. Dr. Tanaka's research has shown that the alginic acid in sea vegetables actually helps bind and draw out any similar toxins that are already stored in our bodies, “lowering the body's burden.”

Cilantro is another great heavy metal remover, detoxifier that combines well with many other herbs for cleansing the body.

I don't use either of the above as a single means for removing heavy metals with pets,

but formulated with other supporting and detoxifying herbs specific to the organs of elimination, they are very much a favorites of mine.

Neurotoxins are toxins that directly affect the Neurological (central nervous) system (thought, emotion, sight, taste, hearing, smell).

Unfortunately, they are commonly prevalent in many pet (and human) products including flea-tick prevention products that are prescribed and used on a regular basis. Studies show many cause seizures, respiratory failure, and much more. If you are currently using a product that you are unsure of the ingredients, do your homework and look up the active ingredients then go online to check them out so you will know what you are putting you're your pets body.

Schisandra Berry is an amazing Adaptogen, that has affinity not only for cleansing, protecting and strengthening the Liver but also to cleanse, protect and strengthen the Central Nervous System which is vital when neurotoxins are present. Schisandra contains about 40 lignans, many of which have very positive effects on the liver. The lignans have a strong hepatoprotective effect, meaning they help protect the liver from chemical damage. It enhances glutathione production in the liver. Glutathione is a very important cellular antioxidant that helps the body get rid of heavy metals and other toxins.

The lignans also stimulate liver glycogen and protein synthesis, inhibit lipid peroxidation, improve bile acid metabolism, promote blood flow to the liver and liver regeneration, and protect the liver against substances like chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

A common issue with our pets' health is: Overuse of antibiotics and steroids to treat what is thought to be an infection where no real diagnosis is made, that have little to no long-term success. Pets symptoms may disappear initially, only to recur within a

How can we prevent toxic overload in our pets' body?

- A good quality whole (unprocessed) food diet, clean, fresh drinking water.
- Living without toxic chemicals in your own environment and being mindful of places you take your pets, (low risk of pesticides/herbicides).
- Ask your veterinarian about titers to determine if your pet actually needs a vaccine that may be “routine.”
- Use natural flea/tick control, bring balance to the immune system and non-toxic products if need be. A healthy pet with a balanced immune system is not a good host to parasites.
- A regular routine of Detoxing with certified organic herbs & superfoods, whether seasonally quarterly or a few days monthly, depending on your individual need.



few months. And at what cost to the immune system?

If your dog suffers from allergies that show via skin issues like hot spots, inflamed skin, chewing paws, etc. and you give steroid therapy you may see improvement with the symptoms but the cause is still there.

So your pet keeps the underlying condition, which is an overreaction of his immune system, and he will more than likely create one or more secondary conditions as side effects of the steroid treatment.

Whether your pet has had antibiotics or steroids (both destroy the mucous lining of the gut and much of the beneficial flora), a good species appropriate Probiotic is necessary to help balance the immune system as 80% of their immune system is in the gut so we want to feed the good bacteria. But it doesn't stop there.....removing the toxins from the eliminatory organs will help the immune system rebalance and achieve the natural flow of homeostasis.

Removing toxins on a regular basis provides optimal health and balances immune function:

Toxins are in many everyday products we use and consume including household cleaners, especially floor cleaners that have ethylene glycol (this is one of the main constituents for anti-freeze) which is extremely dangerous to all pets, toilet cleaners, window cleaners, laundry soaps, etc.

There are some good safe Organic cleaners that while the \$ may be more up front, you need much less to do a better "real" cleaning job and are safe for pets.

To truly detox and cleanse, we must remove toxins from the liver, kidneys, gallbladder, intestines, GI tract, colon, remove harmful bacteria, heavy metals, stimulate (move) the lymphatic system and blood and nourish the skin all the while supporting the immune system with nutritive properties. Be sure that your Detoxifying blend is Certified Organic or without the use of any chemicals to assure no pesticides or herbicides are present.

¹ Adaptogens are remarkable natural substances that help the body adapt to stress, support normal metabolic processes, and restore balance. They increase the body's resistance to physical, biological, emotional and environmental stressors and promote normal physiologic function. They are unique from other substances in their ability to restore the balance of endocrine hormones, modulate the immune system, and allow the body to maintain optimal homeostasis.



Joyce Belcher is a certified herbalist-formulator specializing in organic supplements and medicinals for animals. She resides in York, ME, and is the founder of Herbs for Life, Inc., manufacturer of the Pet Wellness Blends™ and Veterinary Botanicals™ product lines. Ms. Belcher has spent years advancing her herbal studies mentoring with several highly-respected experts in the field of veterinary herbalism. Her areas of expertise include immune balance, the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease in dogs and horses, and custom medicinals in veterinary herbalism. In her practice, Joyce Belcher formulates herbal medicine and supplements for holistic and integrative veterinarians and educates animal owners to be proactive in caring for the health of their animals. She helps owners make informed decisions by speaking to groups through equine and canine symposia and working dog foundations and is a columnist for Dog's Naturally Magazine. She also teaches western herbs for animals to herbal apprentices at herbal schools in New England. You can call 207-451-7093 or go online: www.petwellnessblends.com



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