



# Dogs Naturally

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LICK GRANULOMAS

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## Cat's Claw

Botanical Name: *Uncaria tomentosa*

Family: *Rubiaceae*

Part Used: The bark from the long woody vine

Cat's claw is indigenous to the Amazon rainforest and other tropical areas of South and Central America. Its name is derived from the hook-like thorns that grow along the vine and look like ... cat's claws.

There are two species that are closely related, *Uncaria tomentosa* and *Uncaria guianensis*. *Tomentosa* has yellowish-white flowers while *guianensis* has reddish-orange flowers; they are used interchangeably in the rain forest though *guianensis* has fewer constituents that are considered important therapeutic medicine.

Other species like *Uncaria rhynchophylla* (Gou Teng in Chinese medicine) have entirely different plant chemicals and do not have the same specific actions for the immune system and inflammatory conditions as *tomentosa*.

Cat's claw actions include: immune potentiator, anti-inflammatory, antidepressant, anti-tumor, antiviral, analgesic, anticoagulant, antioxidant, diuretic, blood cleanser, body tonic and urinary tract issues.

Cat's claw has been used in Peru and Europe since the early 1990s as an adjunctive treatment for cancer and AIDS as well as for other immune system diseases. Research published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows anti-mutagenic activity in cancer screening tests.

In herbal medicine, it's used around the world for immune disorders, ulcers, cancer, arthritis, Lyme disease, neuralgias, inflammation of many types, viral diseases like shingles, to cleanse the intestinal tract, Crohn's disease and other inflammatory conditions of the bowel, intestines and stomach.

Cat's claw is highly indicated with Lyme disease. According to Stephen Harrod Buhner in his book *Healing Lyme*, it

increases CD57 white blood cell counts and natural killer (NK) cells, which are an important part of the immune system. After treatment with cat's claw, 85 percent of human patients were found negative for Lyme infection when retested.

I use it quite successfully along with other herbs in preventative formulas and in formulas to combat existing Lyme in dogs and horses.

It is extremely helpful where Lyme arthritis, muscle pain or lethargy is present and when an animal is not responding well to antibiotic treatment. Cat's claw is beneficial for the central nervous system, brain fog or lack of focus due to Lyme, inflammation, overall lackluster in the animal and helps to slow or stop the progression of the disease.

Peruvian veterinarians used cat's claw to treat 15 dogs with parvovirus, and two thirds of them recovered. In other research, significant pain relief was brought to cats and dogs with osteoarthritis, hip dysplasia and disc disease. This herb is well indicated for dogs to help combat demodec-

tic mange, leaky gut, cognitive disorders, respiratory issues, osteoarthritis, some viral infections and as an overall immune stimulant.

When using cat's claw with dogs, the powdered bark, extract or decoction are all suitable. For an immune modulating dose, give ¼ tsp per 40 lbs of body weight of the powdered herb once daily or 5 ml of tincture once daily. For dogs with a compromised immune system, give the above dose two to three times daily.

### Cautions

Cat's claw use is contraindicated during pregnancy or while nursing.

When purchasing cat's claw, it's important to note that due to severe over-harvesting in the Amazon, we need to protect this plant. There is medicine in the root but harvesting the root kills the plant. Please purchase cat's claw from companies that supply the bark and not the root. The medicine in the inner bark of the vine is vital, active. 🐾



Joyce Belcher is an herbalist/formulator of pet supplements and herbal medicinals for veterinarians and is the founder of Herbs for Life Inc. She lives in York, Maine with her husband, two dogs and two cats; they are all rescues. Visit Joyce at [petwellnessblends.com](http://petwellnessblends.com)