

## FACT SHEET

### Holistic Health For Your Pet

**“The purpose of holistic medicine is to treat the ‘whole’: that is the cause rather than just the symptom.”**

#### Principles

Illness is a purposeful process of the animal to heal itself. The body has the inherent ability to:

- Establish good health
- Maintain good health
- Restore good health

In a dog with good health, if there is an interruption to their well-being, the body will always try to heal itself. If the body is not capable of healing itself then this will manifest as an acute illness and finally as a chronic illness whereby the pet does not have the ability at all to heal itself.

Illness does not occur without cause. The underlying causes of disease must be discovered and eliminated before the dog can completely recover from the illness. More often than not, the treatment is to suppress the symptoms, often through administering conventional medicines, which can have a further detrimental effect and side effects to the dog.

Following an illness, the most important factor for recovery is to revert the body to a healthy state. One of the most important factors for this recovery is to ensure that the dog eats a healthy balanced diet.

A balanced diet has to be made up of the following in the correct proportions:

- Proteins – required for muscle development and repair and in the synthesis of proteins within the body
- Carbohydrates and fats – required as fuel and for the synthesis of substances and structures
- Vitamins and minerals – required in very small quantities for specific cellular function
- Fibre – required to assist the proper functioning of the intestines
- Water – a major component of all body fluids and essential for the chemical reactions within the body

If the dog does not have enough protein, then he will not be able grow properly or repair himself and replace muscle, e.g. wounds will not heal. If he does not have sufficient energy containing foods, then he will feel tired and lethargic. If too much energy containing foods are eaten then this can cause a dog to become overweight.

Of course, this is in an idealistic world. Although the dog may be eating what appears to be healthy, other factors must be taken into account.

#### Is the food being correctly utilised?

A high proportion of pet foods manufactured today contain high levels of products that a dog cannot utilize:

- **Wheat, which is not a natural grain to dogs, but a cheap bulking agent. Wheat gluten is a complete protein that is easily damaged during processing.**
- **Soya is another common ingredient in many pet foods. Soya is virtually unusable by the animal's body. Dogs lack the essential amino acid to digest Soya protein.**

Dogs cannot utilise such ingredients and thus have to expel them from their bodies.

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## Are the ingredients of the food suitable?

When cattle, swine, chickens, lambs or any number of other animals meet their end at a slaughterhouse, the choice cuts, lean muscle tissue, and organs prized by humans are trimmed away from the carcass for human consumption.

Most of these remnants are of low quality and provide a questionable source of nutrition for our animals. 'Meat by-products' is a misnomer since these by-products may contain little meat, if any. By-products are those parts of the animal left over after the meat has been stripped away from the bone. Chicken by-products include heads, entrails, lungs, spleen, kidneys, livers, stomachs, blood and intestines.

## What about impurities and chemicals?

Most manufacturers use BHA, BHT and Ethoxyquin. Even those, which state 'no added BHA, BHT or Ethoxyquin', may still have these chemicals in the raw materials.

In order for a dog to have a balanced diet the dogs must be able to utilise nutrients and eliminate waste.

## Development of disease

Dogs fed on the majority of the highly processed foods available on the market, which do not conform to a healthy diet, will begin to exhibit signs of disease. There are various stages the dog will go through which are associated with the development of disease. The first symptoms to be noticed may include:

### Reduced feeding

In order for the dog to compensate for the 'unsuitable' food they are eating, they may stop eating for short periods.

### Increased output

In order to eliminate the undesirable 'nutrients', the dog may attempt to correct this by increasing the output. This can manifest itself in several ways:

- Hyperactivity
- Loss of hair
- Ear problems, e.g. Otitis
- Flakey skin/coat
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Scratching of skin and chewing of feet
- Discharge from orifices like the eyes, ears or genitals
- Evacuation of the anal glands
- High temperature
- Strong smelling urine

As previously stated these are the symptoms of an underlying problem rather than an actual illness but from these we can deduce that a change must be made to the diet of the dog.

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## Worsening of the symptoms

With no changes made to routine or diet, the symptoms will persist and in turn worsen into such ailments as:

- Eczema
- Increased susceptibility to infection
- Stiffening of muscles and joints

## The final stage

If the symptoms are not rectified then the ultimate response will be in the failure of liver and kidneys, onset of diabetes and heat conditions, though these may take years to fully manifest.

## How can we prevent the development of disease?

The top priority is to actually recognise the symptoms and address them before they become a major health risk. The dog should be fed a high quality, natural food in the correct quantities. If the dog is fed a food that contains high quality proteins, no chemical, no preservatives little cereal, then their natural immunity and defense mechanisms will be enhanced and this will enable the body to 'recover' from the illness.

The Naturediet range of pet foods contain only wholesome, natural, high quality ingredients, the perfect diet to prevent the build-up of toxic waste, which leads to the symptoms, and development of disease.

- Protein comes from high quality fresh meats, such as chicken, lamb, rabbit and turkey
- Rice is included - an ingredient which is recognised as being beneficial for maintaining health and in disease prevention
- Vegetables provide a natural source of vitamins and minerals

Many owners report dramatic improvement within a few weeks of a change to Naturediet. The condition of the dog is transformed with improvement in skin and coat. Hair stops falling out, itching ceases and the coat becomes glossy and silky. Unpleasant odours disappear and older dogs become livelier and less stiff. These changes, which may be seen in as little as 2-3 weeks, show that the body has cleared itself of much of the toxic waste, which has been accumulating.

**The main benefit of feeding Naturediet is however, in prevention. From an early age one can avoid the damage to the body caused by progressive build-up of toxic waste.**

## Exercise

Also of great importance is that the dog must be exercised: a sedentary lifestyle for any animal (us included) can promote a build-up of toxins within the body: movement and exercise increases blood flow round the body and organs, cleansing and transporting waste out of the system. A slow plod round the block twice a day may not suffice! This is neither mentally stimulating nor particularly active.

Pick up the pace, get the blood pumping, play some games like 'seek and find' or toy retrieving, find a friendly dog to play and join in with. Make time in your schedule to devote to activity with your dog. Do not see it as a chore but as a bonding ritual of benefit to your relationship. If you find time to go places at the weekend, try to find alternative spaces like country parks and beaches where the dog is welcome and can join you and the rest of the family. You will be amazed at how much more content a dog is following a good day's activity.

## Aggressive, overactive and excitable dogs

It is well known by behaviorists, such as Colin Tennant, who uses Naturediet during training, that these behavioural problems can be exacerbated or even caused by many of the chemical additives and undesirable ingredients found in today's pet foods. The dog attempts to rid the body of the toxins and can demonstrate itself in many of the above problems.

## Vomiting and diarrhoea

Another way for a dog to attempt to rid itself in toxic build up can be seen by bouts of vomiting or diarrhea. Of course this isn't always

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the reason for the symptoms. The best way to test this theory is to eliminate food and give the dog only water for 24 hours. If the symptoms do not disappear, then there may be an underlying health problem and veterinary advice should be taken.

## Fussy eater

We always believe that our pets are unwell if they do not eat. If we put this into perspective alongside humans, there must be foods that you and I do not like and will refuse. Dogs are no different, if they don't like it they won't eat it.

However, if the food is changed, to a more palatable, natural form, such as Naturediet, and the dog continues to refuse food, then veterinarian advice should be taken.

It should also be noted that whilst some dogs will eat and eat regardless of their actual energy requirement, other dogs are not as food driven and may only wish to consume food when they are hungry and as long as they continue to drink normal volumes of water, the occasional fasting day will not be detrimental to health.

Indeed, a fasting half or full day every so often can be of benefit: when continually satisfied and full of food, the major organs are under the constant burden of digestive processes: if food is withheld for a short period time, this burden is reduced allowing the organs to put energy into alternative essential bodily processes, thus further assisting with the removal of toxins. The smaller the dog, the shorter the period of fasting should be i.e. a Cavalier King Charles fed twice a day will benefit from missing one meal, a larger dog like a Labrador should be able to go a whole day without eating: fasting days may still include chewing items with nutritional value e.g. pigs ears, bones etc.

## Ravenous appetite

Just as humans, there are dogs that require higher calorific content in order to maintain their weight. This increase in requirement will be due to a number of factors including:

- Their sex and if they are entire or neutered/spayed
- Their activity level, both mental and physical
- Their activity mode, slow plodder or short distance sprinter
- Their age, a juvenile will have a higher energy requirement than an adult dog of the same weight and build
- Their coat type, a heavy coated dog will not lose energy through heat loss like a short, sparsely haired dog – does your dog seek draughts or warmth?

All of these will impact on the daily nutritional and energy requirement, and it may alter with the seasons and changes to routine.

However, there of course may be other reasons, and if your dog shows any other symptoms including weight loss and diarrhoea then a veterinarian should be consulted. It is imperative that parasite infestation is eliminated.

More likely is that the food the dog is being fed is not providing sufficient energy and thus insufficient nourishment. Although we are able to look at the detailed analysis on pet foods, how do we know that this is the correct combination of nutrients and energy for the individual?

The answer here is to feed a wholesome, natural diet, such as Naturediet, which by virtue of its totally natural content is nutritionally "highly available" and "biologically appropriate" to dogs.

## Tartar on teeth

As we can see from recent advertisements, the majority of pet food manufacturers state that dogs need to be given hard chews in order to eliminate gum disease, halitosis and even loss of teeth. Do we as humans do the same?

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The main reason for the build up of plaque on teeth is due to feeding the wrong kind of food to your pets. Most commercial pet foods, both wet and dry, will contain added sugars, which will predispose the teeth to decay and tartar build-up. Humans start to digest starch/carbohydrate material in the mouth when chewing utilising an enzyme called 'Amylase'; dogs however, rarely chew and do not produce this enzyme in the saliva so carbohydrate digestion will not begin until the food has reached the stomach and small intestines: this means that any biscuit or starch material caught in the teeth will remain there and attract bacteria.

Avoid excess sugars by feeding Naturediet, which has none added, all that present is naturally occurring in the ingredients, and the inclusion of crushed bone in each recipe provides a mild abrasive to the consistency to help clean teeth and gums. To further prevent tooth and gum decay the provision of chews such as bones, pigs ears, rawhide, raw carrots and broccoli stems is essential: items like bones, raw hides and pigs ears should ideally be given under supervision as some dogs will bite off large chunks which pose a choking hazard and if under stress (separation anxiety) then they can 'attack' bones, shattering them and creating sharp shards that could cause problems if ingested.

## Anal glands

They are not actually 'glands' but pockets or sacs which house a foul smelling semi-liquid, this would be emptied during urination as a territory marker or in defence, just like a skunk. The glands/sacs are positioned at 4 and 8 o'clock just inside the anus.

Under good health and ideal circumstances, the glands/sacs would be regularly emptied during normal defecation: however, for a number of reasons, they can become blocked and the contents impacted and assistance in emptying is then necessary as not only are full sacs uncomfortable and irritating, but if left unattended can easily become infected.

The most common sign of an anal gland problem is 'scooting', where the animal drags their bottom across the floor to relieve the irritation and promote emptying. They may also clean, lick and bite their anus, chase their tail or just sit uncomfortably.

If the glands do not empty naturally during defecation, veterinary advice should be sought as it may be necessary to manually clear out the anal glands: unfortunately, the problem is likely to reoccur once it has happened the once, and whilst many owners are capable of performing this procedure once they have been shown how to by their vet, many prefer it to be performed on their behalf due to the smell.

Left untreated, the sacs are likely to become more and more impacted and give rise to infection: this will result in anal gland abscesses and carries a heavier cost for treatment than having them emptied regularly.

In the most extreme cases vets may recommend that the anal glands are removed, and the decision to proceed with such an operation should not be taken lightly: not only does this remove a function the body has to remove toxins but the operation carries the risk of anal sphincter damage resulting in faecal incontinence, and if any tissue is not removed completely then infection and abscess forming will occur.

A diet which has good dietary fibre and a small amount of bone content, such as the Naturediet range, will help keep the anal gland clear, Naturediet Senior/Lite has further elevated fibre levels to improve motions within the bowel.

## Moulting

Dogs in general will moult twice a year in accordance with the spring and autumn seasons. As hair reaches its optimum length, new hair starts to grow and the old hair is lost. The amount of moulting often depends on the type of coat and breed of dog and modern heating systems and lifestyles can make it a more year round event. Natural moulting patterns will not normally result in bald or patchy areas. If these are evident then further investigation into their cause is necessary as it could indicate any number of problems including food allergy, parasites, fungal infection (ringworm), Cushings disease, pressure (bed) sores etc.

Feeding a natural chemical free diet will address any diet related causes and Naturediet is ideal in these circumstances. The menus contain naturally occurring meat fats and oils like Omega 3 and 6 that are known to influence skin and coat condition. Veterinary advice should be sought for other less obvious causes of hair problems.

## Skin irritations

Of course loss of hair might not be the only problem. In many cases this can develop into skin irritations such as dermatitis or eczema. This can be seen in localised hair loss which can also be aggravated by the dog scratching the area which is causing the problem.

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In some cases this can be caused by parasites such as fleas, mites or fungal infections like ringworm. These causes should be eliminated by the veterinarian surgeon. Itching skin is one of the most common problems for which a dog owner takes their pet to the vets.

The most common form of treatment given by vets for skin irritations with unknown causes is the use of anti-inflammatory drugs, antibiotics, and de-sensitising regimes all of which address the effects and may for the time relieve the symptoms, but they not address the originating cause. The use of these types of drugs may even aggravate other areas of the body and will often have side effects.

In order to find a 'cure' for the problem, we must first look at the 'cause' and this may be due to environmental (dust mites) or internal (food allergy) exposure to an allergen or toxin. As an organ, one of the skins main roles is to eliminate toxins. Toxins are transported in the blood to the skin for elimination, as they are excreted then the skin becomes inflamed as blood flow increases round the site and the dog starts scratching. As the inflammation persists, the itching increases, to the point when the dog scratches so much, he draws blood. You may also notice that chewing and licking of the feet due to the presence of sweat glands.

Dogs have mast cells located under the skin: mast cells produce histamine, hence anti-histamine drugs. The release of histamine inflames the tissue as it tries to combat the toxins. How many times have we, as humans been bitten by insects, which have caused a red inflamed reaction?

Again the natural way to solve this problem is to remove the cause, which should in turn remove the symptoms. This is very difficult in the case of environmental allergens such as pollens and dusts but a change of diet may help improve the skins natural defenses and reduce these symptoms. Dietary associated allergens can be established and completely eliminated by changing to a natural product, such as Naturediet. The best way to introduce the food is in slightly smaller quantities than is required to maintain the weight of the dog. Of course don't expect an immediate response; skin problems may take 3-4 weeks or longer to clear, as the dog has to expel all of the toxins from the body and blood.

## Arthritis/rheumatism

There are two main differences between these two ailments. Arthritis is the inflammation of the joints whilst Rheumatism is pain and stiffness in the muscles. Having said that, pain and stiffness of the joints, are also associated with arthritis. Either of these ailments can be the result of a build-up of toxic wastes within the body: excess protein, either from too high an intake above the normal requirement for the body, or proteins from highly processed unnatural foods. In either case the proteins are not utilised of by the body but are detoxified by the liver and kidneys. The organs releasing "urea" a waste product, which is not rapidly eliminated from tissue causing inflammation and in the joints "uric acid" deposits.

We again must look at the cause rather than the symptom. If the body can no longer eliminate the toxins, as the toxins are at such a high level that the body cannot deal with them all, then a change to a natural diet, such as Naturediet may assist with the process.

Introduction of a natural food will also assist the function of the liver or kidney, which could be contributing to the problem. The functionality of these organs will be increased by a natural diet. A change of diet is fundamental to solving the problem. This may take a few weeks or even longer before significant improvements are seen, as muscle or joint problems are at a deeper level than skin problems.

## Ear inflammation – Otitis

Another obvious symptom of digestive problems associated with highly processed food is the exhibition of ear irritation problems such as head shaking and scratching.

There may simply be a build up of wax within the ears or possibly ear mites (look for dark granular dirt) and in which case advice on suitable treatments should be sought from your veterinary surgeon.

The ear canal however, being warm and moist, provides an excellent medium for the growth of bacteria, fungus, and yeasts, which combined with inflammation caused by scratching, can progress to a severe ear infection. On inspection of the ear canal, obvious signs of overgrowth may present as discharge, smelly canker, and increased moistness. Whilst a short course of antibiotics and antifungal agents may be necessary to remedy existing infection, the problem is highly likely to reoccur unless the bacterial/fungal growth can be controlled and inhibited.

The best preventative measure is dietary adjustment: yeasts, carbohydrates and sugars will feed any bacteria or fungus residing within the canal, so it is important to reduce or eliminate their consumption as the first measure in preventing ear problems. Naturediet is regularly recommended for dogs prone to ear infections as it contains no yeast or added sugar and will therefore help starve any organisms in the ears.

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There is rice within the range but only between 10 - 15% of the recipe is well utilised for energy with little left over. The natural meat juices within the white meat diets will also help maintain the skins natural defences and in general we recommend feeding our Chicken or Fish menu in the first instance.

## Diarrhoea

It has been proved that diets of a low quality can be a major contributing factor to diarrhoea and loose stool formation. The reason for this may be that the food is not digested properly and can cause bowel inflammation and the result of this inflammation is reduced bowel function. The reason why highly processed foods may not be properly digested is the molecules have been changed so dramatically through their processing that the body does not recognise them as natural products. Particular substances, such as wheat and soy are not natural to dogs and are never well tolerated especially in large volumes and constant supply.

The best way to ascertain whether this is the case is to remove the potential food problem from the dog. This can be achieved by only giving water to the dog for a period of 24 hours. Then food should be gradually reintroduced, such as Naturediet Chicken, Naturediet Sensitive, or Naturediet Fish, known for their non-allergenic properties.

However, if symptoms persist, this may be due to other causes, such as pancreatic insufficiency, and should always be referred to a veterinary surgeon for diagnosis

However, the first step to take is to introduce Naturediet. We would advise that to start with that you reduce the amounts of food and then gradually increase the amount as the dog shows tolerance to the food.

## Liver and kidney problems

The liver and kidney are two complex organs within the body and complete coverage of these organs cannot be contained in this Fact Sheet. We have seen an increase in the past forty years in kidney disease (nephritis) and poor liver function.

The increase can be widely attributed to the increased use of highly processed foods, often using poor quality ingredients. Highly processed foods contain poor quality protein such as feather meal, which cannot be easily digested by dogs. However, high quality proteins such as fresh meats contained in Naturediet are rapidly and easily digested. Highly processed foods are not presented in a natural form to the digestive system and may therefore be viewed as unrecognized and non-nutritious.

As previously stated wheat or soya contain levels of proteins, but the wrong type of proteins, which can place an enormous burden on organs such as the liver and kidney. The primary responsibility for detoxifying unnatural substances lies with the liver and thereafter the kidneys for eliminating them from the body.

In order to prevent problems with both the kidney and the liver, feed high quality natural foods such as Naturediet from an early age. However, the process of both liver and kidney degeneration can be aided by a change to a natural diet at any stage of life.

## Summary

There are many conditions that develop in our animals that are directly linked to the chemical based lifestyles that we all now live in. Environmental exposure to these elements can be very difficult to control and eliminate but a healthy diet is the first step to maintaining healthy immunity and natural defenses which in turn may reduce the effects of chemicals and allergens in the environment: "you are what you eat" is not just applicable to humans but all animals.

Many commercial pet foods are made with the sole purpose of profit: cheaper and cheaper ingredients are used and fortified with synthetic and unnatural nutrients used to ensure the food is scientifically 'complete and balanced' and in theory should provide the animal with everything it needs in the diet.

Our experience is that nutrition is more of an art than a science and whilst scientific analysis is useful to prove good nutrition, it is too widely used by food manufacturers to prove where short cuts and cheaper material can be used.

To feed a healthy diet therefore means eliminating:

- Chemical additives

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- Synthetic vitamins and minerals
- Excessively cooked and processed foods
- Unnecessary ingredients

And introduction of:

- Ingredients suited to the individual's digestive system i.e. primarily meat for dogs
- Variety of ingredients
- Natural food vitamins and minerals
- Minimally processed ingredients
- High quality, previously unprocessed ingredients
- Naturediet

Diet is such a large contributor to overall health and well being that it should be given careful and considered thought for all individuals. You are what you eat, and for our pets, they will be what we feed them.

Our bodies rely on food for fuel to work efficiently and effectively but there is a big difference between quality, easily burned fuels that are natural to the system and cheap, bulky fuels that take energy just to utilize them.

**Good nutrition will promote good health.**

**Poor nutrition will inhibit health and leave an animal susceptible to illness.**

Skin and digestive problems are far more common in humans and companion animals than they were 30 years ago: processed, flavoured, coloured and preserved food entered the market 30 years ago!

If you really want to be sure of what you are feeding your dog, then you may have thought home cooking with fresh local produce was your only option, however. At Naturediet we use only the highest quality meat (not meat meal) to make up the recipes, with a small amount of rice and fresh vegetables: there are no chemical additives in any of our ingredients and we do not add any during our manufacturing process: these quality ingredients are purely steam sterilised and thereby retain all the natural goodness and essence of the ingredients.

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