

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

Wellspring Custom Pharmacy

June 2011

Volume 5, Issue 6

In The News

by Nathan Kochheiser, Pharm D Candidate

Animal Friendly Supplements: Making the Most of Your Pet's Health

Many Americans now view their pets as important members of their family. Because of this, many people are realizing just how important a healthy diet can be for their lovable companion. Natural and organic diets, as well as nutritious supplements are increasing in popularity as people seek to prevent chronic diseases and increase the overall health and happiness of their animal friends. As an owner who wishes to obtain the best possible health for your pet, there are several things you can do.

Nutrition is the key to any animal's health. Animals are similar to humans, in that their bodies are totally reliant on nutrition for proper functioning. Without a proper intake of vitamins, minerals and other nutritious elements, normal body processes such as healing, energy, and mental ability would be impaired in pets just as much as they would in humans. Simple ways to promote healthy nutrition include using the highest quality food possible. To ensure food quality, always check the ingredients in your pet food. Buy foods with natural ingredients such as beef, chicken, vegetables, brown rice, and meat meal. Avoid



fillers such as white rice and cornmeal, which may be poorly digested by most animals. Also avoid chemicals, preservatives, food coloring, and generally any word you cannot pronounce. Additionally an ingredient called 'animal by-product meal' is a filler which provides no nutritional content.

Supplements may also be important for many pets. In particular, omega-3 fatty acid formulations can help fill a gap found in most commercial pet diets. The natural prey of dogs and cats is high in omega-3s. However due to the process by which commercial food is produced, these important nutrients are often deactivated into other types of fatty acids, leaving the final product woefully deficient in omega-3s. In addition to general good health, these products may benefit conditions such as arthritis and dry skin conditions. Other useful supplements for pets include digestive enzymes, probiotics, and antioxidants. For pets who may be advanced in age or fighting an illness, immune boosting supplements may also be very beneficial.

Historically, many human supplements have been given to pets by their owners, however, this causes a problem with dosing. Animals differ greatly to humans in terms of weight and metabolism, which makes it very hard to prevent overdosing, which in some situations could cause serious harm to the animal. For this reason a variety of made-for-animal supplements have recently entered U.S. markets. The integrity of these products is

important to consider as well. To be sure you are picking the safest products for your pet, look for the NASC (National Animal Supplement Council) Quality Seal on supplements you buy. This will ensure the product meets the highest levels of quality.

Many times, a medication your pet may need is unavailable in a form that is able to be taken by a pet. Perhaps an antibiotic is only made for a human or is not available in the proper strength for a cat. It is also possible a certain medication that is rarely used in animals is unavailable in a form that your dog can take. This is where compounding pharmacists can make a huge difference. By working with your vet, specialty compounding pharmacists can take your pet's unique situation and tailor a medication specifically designed for Fluffy, Gabby, or Rover. Using their extensive knowledge of medications and their properties, compounding pharmacists can even prepare medications that have a taste preferred by specific species. Ask your friends at Wellspring Custom Pharmacy to find out how they can help you and your vet take care of your pet's unique healthcare needs.

What else can you do to boost your best friend's healthy lifestyle? Make sure your pet gets frequent (daily if possible) exercise, lots of attention, and regular check-ups at the vet. If your animal is experiencing recurrent digestive problems, consider possibility of a food allergy. Switching to a corn-free or wheat-free feed may help if this happens to be the case. Paying attention to your animal's nutritional and dietary needs now can potentially save you a great deal of money and grief later. A healthy diet and lifestyle can help ensure that your pet lives the happiest life possible and will continue to be there for you for many years to come.

Note: Wellspring Custom Pharmacy has started carrying ARC Natural pet products. If you are interested in other natural products for your pet, please let us know-we may be able to help you find them.

Vitamin D May Prevent Early AMD in Women

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease characterized by irreversible vision loss. Associated with increasing age, the center of the visual field slowly begins to blur, making it difficult to read or recognize faces. In a recent study, however, post-menopausal women less than 75 years of age who used Vitamin D showed a significantly decrease in chance of developing AMD. The group with the greatest benefit took an average of 720 IU of Vitamin D daily. This study supports a 2007 study which showed lower AMD rates in people who drank milk regularly. This study does not offer any definitive evidence that taking Vitamin D will lower your risk of getting AMD. However, it does strengthen the view that Vitamin D supplementation appears to have wide-reaching health benefits for a variety of chronic health conditions.

Vitamin D is known to be necessary for the proper absorption of calcium, making it a vital nutrient for bone health. Recent evidence, however, has suggested great potential benefits for conditions ranging from rheumatoid arthritis to cancer. Although the Institute of Medicine currently recommends 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily for those less than 70 years of age and 800 IU daily for those greater than 70 years, a growing body of research suggests that many adults may need a significantly higher amount. In particular, dark skinned people, the elderly, those with little exposure to sunlight, and those using sunscreen are at a high risk of not getting enough vitamin D. Obesity, gastrointestinal diseases, and poor diets also increase the risk of vitamin D deficiency. Since research suggests vitamin D deficiency may lead to osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, skeletal-muscular diseases, cardiovascular dysfunction, and possibly even cancer, it makes sense that we take this vitamin very seriously. For more information about vitamin D and what dose is right for you, stop in to Wellspring Custom Pharmacy and ask one of our helpful staff members. As always, our concern is to help you prevent chronic illness and stay as healthy as possible!

2291 West Fourth Street Mansfield, OH 44906

(419)756-2559 www.wellstore.com