

Detox Your Dog

Simple steps to keep your dog healthy from the inside out.

By Shawn Messonnier, DVM

An important part of helping a sick dog heal is to detoxify her body. Toxins can build up in the body, either because of chronic disease or extensive use of medications, such as corticosteroids, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), antibiotics and anti-fungal drugs. Using gentle herbal and homeopathic remedies and nutritional supplements, veterinarians who practice integrative medicine help cleanse the dog's body and allow greater healing to occur. The following tips can help you with your pet's detoxification: A brief fast lasting 12 to 24 hours can benefit most pets. Plenty of fresh, clean, filtered water should be available to your pet during this time. Do not start the fast without your veterinarian's supervision.

Switching to a more natural food can benefit your dog's long-term health. Feeding a high-quality, natural diet is one of the simplest steps you can take to minimize toxins accumulating in your dog's body. You can also feed a homemade cooked or raw diet. Work with your dog's veterinarian to slowly introduce this healthier diet after the fast has been completed.

Supplements, including prebiotics (nutrients which serve as food for probiotics), probiotics (helpful bacteria and yeasts which keep the GI system healthy) and glutamine (an amino acid which serves as fuel for GI cells), can help heal a dog's damaged gastrointestinal system. Because a damaged gastrointestinal system can lead to further absorption of toxins, this is an important step for most dogs undergoing a detoxification program.

Milk thistle, an herb used to detoxify and heal a damaged liver, is useful when detoxing a dog. The liver is one of the main organs of detoxification – a damaged liver allows toxins to accumulate in the dog's body.

Homeopathics are often used as part of a gentle whole-body detoxification. Lymphomyosot, berberis, and nux vomica are homeopathic remedies designed to allow a gentle detoxification of the urogenital system, gastrointestinal system, and blood and lymphatic systems.

If your dog is sick and overmedicated, detoxing may help. Work with a holistic veterinarian to incorporate a sensible detoxification protocol into your dog's overall treatment regimen that allows healing to occur.