

Natural Dog Success Story: Natural Care Cures Tummy Woes

Test designed for humans helps get Beagle past intestinal distress.

Denise Flaim

The dog: Murphy, a 2-year-old Beagle.

The problem: Months before reaching his first birthday, Murphy had a laundry list of health complaints: regular bouts of vomiting and diarrhea, along with chronic ear infections and the occasional urge to drag his hind end along the floor. Specialists at a major veterinary hospital diagnosed him with inflammatory bowel disease — irritated and inflamed intestines.

The conventional approach: Suspecting that a food allergy might be causing IBD, some vets recommend changing a dog's diet to a novel protein — one to which he has never been exposed. In addition to switching to a prescription diet, Murphy was put on metronidazole, a drug that reduces inflammation. In tougher cases, a steroid such as prednisone is sometimes prescribed.

The metronidazole helped get Murphy's episodic diarrhea under control. "But every time he got off it, the problem would reoccur," his owner Danny Klein remembers.

The holistic approach: Wanting to get to the root of Murphy's woes rather than just treat the symptoms, Klein sought out holistic veterinarian Sharon Doolittle, DVM. Doolittle is one of less than a dozen vets who have adapted a human testing procedure called autonomic response testing, or ART, to animals.

How it works: ART evaluates the status of the autonomous nervous system, which governs involuntary action including organ function, by testing certain acupuncture points. Muscle testing determines the strength of these points: For people, the subject holds his or her arm out, and the tester tries to push the arm down, noting its resistance. The less the resistance, the weaker the test point.

Because direct muscle testing on animals is not feasible, Doolittle uses a surrogate person to make a circuit between animal and veterinarian. The surrogate places a hand on the animal, and then Doolittle muscle-tests the surrogate.

What she found: Doolittle's ART test showed weakness in Murphy's stomach, small and large intestines, and pancreas, where digestive enzymes are produced. To reduce inflammation and help his intestines repair themselves, she recommended several supplements: membrane-healing herbs such as ginkgo biloba, slippery elm, and Jerusalem artichoke, as well as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*; digestive enzymes to help break down nutrients; more bacteria to help rebuild a healthy intestinal environment; and a readily absorbed supplement with a range of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

Murphy's itchy ears and bottom suggested his immune system was wavering, so Doolittle prescribed an immune support product. When subsequent ART scans showed that Murphy's liver and kidneys needed detoxification, Doolittle added a drainage remedy to clear out toxins and improve organ circulation.

The result: As Murphy continued with his supplements, his ear infections disappeared, as did his intestinal upsets. Klein even put him back on his old food. "Fundamentally, I'm somewhat of a skeptic when it comes to this stuff," Klein admits, so after nine months, he discontinued the supplement regimen.

As soon as he did, the ear infections returned, "and I needed to put him back on drops and antibiotics and ointment." Klein immediately resumed Murphy's supplements, and he hasn't had another ear infection since.

Resources: Doolittle is one of the few veterinarians in the country who has adapted autonomic response testing for use in animals, an exclusivity she hopes will change soon. For more information, visit www.nihadc.com/enviro_art.htm

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