

Vitamin C and Holistic Medicine

Among other health benefits, vitamin C improves the health of your dog's skin.

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Vitamin C (ascorbic acid), one example of the “uploaders” that benefit skin cells, has been well documented as a skin helper. In addition to its antioxidative capacity, vitamin C participates in several biological roles, including protecting the skin against sunlight and its primary role in collagen synthesis, which is crucial for skin regeneration and wound repair. Vitamin C also modulates keratinocyte and lymphocyte differentiation, helping to produce healthier mature skin and cells of the immune system.

Further, vitamin C has at least two beneficial effects for cancer prevention: it is beneficial to the inner-cell mechanism that helps damaged cells die off rather than grow into tumor cells; and it seems to help the effects of at least some chemotherapeutic agents.

Finally, we know that vitamin C is accumulated in healthy skin cells, apparently waiting there for any increased need. And, it is found in lower amounts in cells of older animals, a possible reason for increased cell aging in the elderly.

Veterinarians have been taught that dogs do not need vitamin C because they can produce it themselves. However, most holistic vets feel that there are plenty of occasions when the “normal” amount of produced vitamin C isn’t enough for the need – one example being skin allergies that require enhanced antioxidant and healing activities. My own recommendation is to routinely add maintenance levels of vitamin C to the diet, and to increase these amounts to therapeutic levels whenever necessary. Check with your holistic vet for dosages.

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