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## Holistic Medicine and How it Can Help Your Pet

### Keeping Your Pet Healthy, Naturally



Like their owners, a pet's health can also benefit by eating healthier foods and finding the right medical care when it is needed. However, this medical care need not always be traditional in nature.

For example, acupuncture can be used to relieve pain and strengthen the body's immune system; herbal medicines can serve to enhance nutrition, improve body synergy and as a remedy to ailments when nothing else works; and homeopathy can treat the deepest constitutional causes of your pet's diseases.

petMD's Yahaira Cespedes spoke with Nancy Scanlan, executive director of the American Holistic Veterinary Medicine Association (AHVMA), to bring us more on the developments in this exciting field of veterinary medicine.

#### Is holistic veterinary medicine hocus-pocus?

The idea of holistic medicine may conjure up images of a rustic apothecary and ineffectual diagnostic measures, but holistic medicine is a progressive industry replete with learned practitioners. Also, the many benefits of the holistic approach have been published in respected clinical trials and research articles.

#### Why choose holistic veterinary care?

While the "find it and kill it" Western medical approach may work for infectious diseases, holistic medicine uses preventative measures by treating the whole body. Holistic veterinary care is much more effective when treating chronic illnesses like heart disease.

This is not to say Western medicine isn't useful. For emergency situations requiring surgery, for example, Western medicine will save a pet's life. In addition, holistic veterinarians also integrate Western diagnostic methods in their care regimen, such as X-rays and laboratory tests.

#### But, doesn't holistic therapy cost more?

Medical treatments can get expensive, but some holistic approaches offer cheaper and equally effective results. Because herbs and nutritional supplements can't be patented, the holistic vet can offer a wider array of remedies. This can make a significant difference, especially in chronic illness cases.

#### Where do I find out more information about holistic medicine?

Interested pet owners can conduct a free search for holistic veterinarians by state or specialty at the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association's [website](#).

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