



The Right Vet for Your Pet

Animals Thrive with Gentle, Safe and Natural Approaches

by Shawn Messonnier

Pet parents have many criteria to consider when choosing a healthcare provider for their prized pet, and among the most vital is trying to find a doctor that uses holistic therapies, because the advantages are many.

Wellness care is more than vaccines. While many conventional vets consider giving vaccines and flea medications to all of their patients to be their best form of wellness care, holistic vets know these aren't always necessary and can potentially be harmful. Instead, true wellness care involves careful consideration of proper diet, blood titer testing instead of vaccines, natural parasite control when appropriate and a heavy dose of diagnostic testing (blood, urine, fecal) to monitor organ function, check for parasites, screen for disorders of the urogenital system, liver and pancreas and early screening for cancer and other inflammatory conditions. There's also a full physical check for common diseases like dental and heart disease and tumors.

Individualized prescriptions for a proper diet and supplements to maintain health are big reasons many owners prefer a holistic vet.

Natural treatments include disease prevention. Many pets treated via a more natural approach have an easier experience with occasional illness than those that don't enjoy this specialized care. Natural therapies can quickly restore an ill pet to his homeostatic balance without the side effects often associated with multiple drug doses.

A team approach is expected. A holistic practice is a team effort, and the family doctor will suggest options for care, helping an owner decide on the best therapies for each pet.

A fuller range of options is available. While holistic vets

prefer a more natural approach, they know that if necessary, conventional therapies can sometimes be an appropriate complement if they follow holistic principles, which means infrequent use of low-dose medications and only when absolutely needed. In general, most conditions can be treated successfully without drug therapy, extending the health and life of the patient and reducing medical costs.

Dr. Shana Silverstein, Bowman Animal Clinic in Raleigh, NC states: "An advantage of working with an integrative veterinarian is that more options are available for treatment. Your doctor will be comfortable discussing both Eastern and Western medicine, and will be able to make recommendations that embrace the most effective options from both. You can then make more broadly informed decisions for the care of your pet."

Gentler anesthesia means quicker recovery. A naturally balanced and gentler approach means less drugging if anesthesia becomes necessary, close monitoring of an anesthetized pet, a smooth and quick recovery for prompt discharge from the hospital and natural forms of follow-up treatment to control post-operative pain and inflammation.

New hope rises for the hopeless. Many pets are brought to holistic doctors after conventional care has failed to help them. Some have been turned away by practitioners of conventional medicine because their cases are diagnosed as "hopeless". Holistic vets and pet parents alike experience considerable satisfaction in helping to give a joyful pet a whole new lease on life.

Shawn Messonnier, a doctor of veterinary medicine practicing in Plano, TX, is the award-winning author of "The Natural Health Bible for Dogs & Cats" and "Unexpected Miracles: Hope and Holistic Healing for Pets." For more information, visit PetCareNaturally.com.