

# CANINE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION



# CASES OF CANINE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION SEEM TO BE ON THE RISE, BUT THERE ARE TREATMENTS THAT CAN HELP RETURN YOUR DOG TO HER PUPPY-LIKE SELF.



*Since beginning her holistically oriented veterinary practice over 30 years ago, Deva Khalsa VMD has been incorporating homeopathy, acupuncture, Chinese herbs, nutritional advice and techniques such as Allergy Elimination and JMT into her approach. Today her work is a blend of sophisticated holistic techniques and traditional veterinary medicine designed to best enhance the natural strengths and attributes of her patient. She is available for worldwide consults by contacting her online at [doctordeva.com](http://doctordeva.com)*

If your dog is exhibiting behavioral changes that are disrupting her life and yours, she could have canine cognitive dysfunction (CCD).

CCD affects how your dog thinks, learns and remembers. Similar to Alzheimer's disease in humans, CCD is caused by physical changes in the brain and its chemicals. Past studies have shown that some older dogs with CCD have brain lesions that are very similar to those seen in human Alzheimer's patients.

There's now some research suggesting vitamin D deficiency may be partly to blame.

## VITAMIN D

A new study published in the peer-reviewed medical journal *Neurology* suggests

there is an association between older adults who don't get enough vitamin D and an increased risk of acquiring dementia such as Alzheimer's disease (AD). This study found that people with low levels of vitamin D3 had a 53 percent increased risk for dementia. They were also 70 percent more likely to develop Alzheimer's.

"We expected to find an association between low vitamin D levels and the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, but the results were surprising – we actually found that the association was twice as strong as we anticipated," said study author Dr David Llewellyn of the University of Exeter Medical School in the UK.

Dr Llewellyn added that large double-blind, randomized, placebo controlled trials are currently ongoing and should

provide results within the next few years. The results may show that vitamin D is a promising therapy in the prevention and treatment of dementia and AD.

## VITAMIN D3 SUPPLEMENTATION

That said, getting more sunshine is not the answer for our dogs. Dogs don't use sunshine to create vitamin D as humans do. With all their fur, that would make sense. Their source of vitamin D is their diet. To compound the issue there are other factors that play a role in vitamin D uptake including intestinal absorption, age, intact status and renal function.

I have treated many older CCD dogs with vitamin D3 supplementation with excel-

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lent results. I only recommend vitamin D3 and not synthetic vitamin D; buy a vitamin D3 brand derived from whole food sources. Liquid vitamin D3 is easy to give dogs because they don’t mind the taste in their food.

## COMMERCIAL DIETS ARE A FACTOR

VDI Laboratory started to test vitamin D3 levels in animals several years ago and found that 75 percent of dogs and cats fed commercial dog food are insufficiently fortified with D3. One problem is that the vitamin D in commercial diets is poor quality, synthetic vitamin D, which is not well absorbed. Feeding kibble can also lead to dysbiosis, an

imbalance of bacteria in the gut that could also lead to diminished vitamin D levels.

I recommend you have your dog’s vitamin D3 level tested at [vdilab.com](http://vdilab.com). Correcting any deficiency may help prevent or even treat CCD in your dog. Again, make sure you buy vitamin D3 derived from whole food sources, not synthetic vitamin D.

It takes some time – about six weeks – for oral supplementation to reach acceptable levels. If you use VDI labs to test they will recommend a dose if your dog is deficient and then you can follow up to see if levels have been maintained.

Otherwise, I would give a 20 lb dog 2,000 IU a day for a month to six weeks and then lower to a maintenance dose of half that

amount. Adjust your dog’s dose from that level according to her weight.

Feeding your dog raw meat from wild prey and pastured animals can also be helpful as they’ll have more natural vitamin D than domesticated animals who are often raised indoors.

## THE MELATONIN RESET BUTTON

Melatonin is also helpful for older dogs who don’t sleep at night and bark at odd hours. In essence, melatonin is the reset button for circadian rhythms affecting the internal clock system that influences everything from cellular health and hormone signaling to mental acuity. But again, that’s



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only part of the story. Melatonin is also a potent antioxidant, immune modulator and master rejuvenation hormone. It's been proven to actively promote cellular health. Giving dogs a dose of melatonin before bed is totally safe. Give dogs under 30 pounds one to three milligrams; three to five milligrams for dogs over 30 pounds; and up to nine milligrams for large breeds over 50 pounds.

## STEM CELL TARGETING

I've also recently used Swiss stem cell targeting products for CCD.

Toby was an extremely intelligent therapy dog. At the age of 13, he began waking his people up five times a night to go out and roam, dig or sit down. He would stand around looking lost and didn't even notice his people were near. He scratched furiously at the carpet as though it were dirt. He had a dazed look and was unaware of his environment and confused. This very intelligent and very well trained dog could not do any of his old tricks. He also had fits of extreme anxiety.

His Swiss stem cell program was to last for 10 days with the owners giving him injections at home. By the middle of the second week they noticed a dramatic change. His eyes became bright and he reverted to his former playful self. He starting playing his old games and stole a heavy shoe that he found in the bedroom closet. He was performing all his old tricks again. His owners said that his change in behavior was amazing. Toby was even reverting to some of his puppyish traits, which he had not done for years.

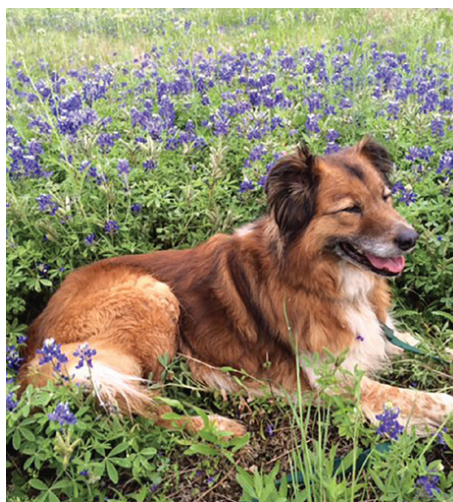


Photo Credit: Ingrid Edlund-Berry

As the Swiss stem cell product I used targets the brain, I expect this to produce a relatively permanent change.

## HOMEOPATHY

*Baryta carbonica* is a homeopathic remedy indicated in cases of mental weakness, loss of memory, senile dementia and confusion. The 6X potency can be given orally without food up to three times a day for a month and improvement should be watched for and noted. I have found it to be helpful in some cases but I also like to check D3 levels and include other modalities in the treatment of CCD.

I don't know why the number of dogs with CCD is on the rise. I didn't see this problem much at all when I began my practice more than 30 years ago. The good news is that I've listed these proven methods that you can use to reverse the problem and enjoy your dog's golden years. Their lives are, regrettably, always too short for us. 🐾

## CCD Behaviors

Your dog may have CCD if she has a number of the following behaviors:

- ☒ Becomes lost in familiar places around the home or backyard
- ☒ Becomes trapped behind familiar furniture or in room corners
- ☒ Has trouble finding and using doors and negotiating stairways
- ☒ Does not respond to her name or familiar commands
- ☒ Is withdrawn and unwilling to play, go for walks or even go outside
- ☒ Does not recognize or is startled by family members, toys, television or interior lighting
- ☒ Frequently trembles or shakes, either while standing or lying down
- ☒ Paces or wanders aimlessly throughout the house
- ☒ Has difficulty learning new tasks, commands or routes
- ☒ Frequently soils in the house, regardless of how often she goes outside
- ☒ Sleeps more during the day, less during the night
- ☒ Stares at walls or into space
- ☒ Seeks less and less of your attention, praise and play
- ☒ Is hesitant to take treats, drink fresh water or eat fresh food



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