

Are You Getting the **WHOLE** Idea about Health?

Whole health is neither food nor exercise. Choosing the right food or getting the proper amount of exercise is healthy, but these elements alone are only part of a bigger picture.



Whole health results from three interdependent parts—lifestyle, nutrition, and supplementation.

Lifestyle includes the physical, social, psychological, and economic environments that we encounter and inhabit every day. The way we deal with stress and our daily habits affect us mentally and emotionally, which impacts our physical well-being. Nutrition—as a science—studies the way an organism ingests and absorbs vitamins and minerals in food—a synonym of *sustenance*, meaning something that supports life. (Good nutrition both sustains and prolongs life. Perhaps our innate knowledge of this drives our *diet* obsession, for both ourselves and our dogs.) In other words, nutrition centers on the foods we (and our dogs) eat and the way our bodies use those foods as fuel. Lifestyle and nutrition are extremely important in maintaining health. But whole health is more than a few workouts a week or nibbling on celery instead of chips. We read the latest copy of health-centered magazines or buy the newest trending workout DVD in pursuit of a healthier existence, hoping for a longer, happier life for ourselves and our pets. But more than a fad, health is a daily commitment to all parts of a *trifold* structure.

Many health concepts for humans and dogs relate to one another, so let's focus on canine health for a moment. Creating a healthy diet for your

dog, whether a puppy or a senior, will boost his quality of life and longevity, no doubt. Health, like beauty, works from the inside, out—input to output. But even well-proportioned meals may leave holes in your dog's nutritional needs. Supplements fill in the gaps. That's why it's so important to understand the basics of whole health, how lifestyle, nutrition, and supplementation are an interdependent structure that works to improve and sustain quality of life.

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Although each dog is unique, dogs (and humans alike) have physical bodies that follow nature's designs. Just like a well-designed machine, the body must be maintained regularly in order to function at its best. How well this physical "machine" is maintained will define how healthy your dog remains and how long his life will be. We maintain our automobiles and houses, but most of us don't maintain our own bodies or our dogs' bodies as well as we should.

Even when we dig below the surface, we get snagged on only part of the truth. We have trained ourselves to notice the protein, carbohydrate, and fat content of the dog food we purchase. While these provide

energy for the cell, and materials for the cell's structure, it's actually the vitamins and minerals that provide the tools that maintain and clean out the cells.

Cells are like microscopic homes or buildings that are always under construction. Cells are the structures. Hammers, mops, detergent, nails, glue, paint—these tools keep our homes in good shape. Just so, the vitamins and minerals your dog ingests

keep his "home"—which is made up of cells that use vitamins and minerals as *their* tools to stay healthy—in tip-top shape.

Good health runs on good nutrition. (Remember, nutrition studies how we intake and absorb nutrients.) But even eating healthy foods can leave our cells lacking certain vitamins and minerals. Cells—the building blocks of life—run a constant race against disease and aging. To use the "home" comparison, healthy foods provide your cells with the tools to keep their basic structure in repair, but having only a well-kept structure does not make a "livable" space. The home must be functional in order for the structure to achieve its full purpose. Furniture and appliances, for example, help make a house function on a daily level. That's where *supplements* come in to play. A supplement, by definition, is something that brings improvement or completion when added to another thing. Cells need the extra vitamins and minerals found in supplements to combat disease and aging, with the reward being a healthier, happier, and longer life. Healthy foods create a strong





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cell structure, but supplements add in the missing vitamins and minerals cells need to thrive. Both (nutrition and supplements) are needed in order for the cell to reach its greatest level of health.

One in two dogs in the United States will develop cancer. Cancer is the highest cause of death in dogs. The instances of cancer continue to rise, along with the increase of environmental toxins. But cancer prevention is as easy as the ABCs of supplementation. Quality supplements enable the body to rid its cells of toxins, providing dogs with the tools they need to help avoid cancer and many other diseases. Your dog's cells, just like yours, need balanced and complete supplementation every single day.

Nowadays, there are so many supplement choices and claims it's tough to find the best product for your dog. There's just no reason to purchase a supplement that does not contain everything your dog needs

to stay healthy and vibrant. You need to know how to compare labels and understand ingredients so that you can purchase a quality supplement. Many commercial pharmacy supplements contain additives (coloring agents, binders, fillers, sugars) which inhibit the vitamins and minerals from proper absorption. Cheap supplements are often cheaply made, inferior versions. Finding a supplement where the vitamins and minerals are closest to how they occur in nature will supply the highest quality to your dog.

Vitamins and minerals work together, and if they're not balanced; containing all the ingredients the cells need, the job simply doesn't get done. *For example, calcium needs magnesium and active Vitamin D₃ to work effectively.* Additionally, a vitamin supplement that has a *complete* menu of balanced ingredients can be much more effective. Certain vitamins and minerals help each other work more efficiently. *Vitamin E works much better when Vitamin C is in*

the mix, and Selenium and Vitamin E work together to prevent cancer. If a few inexpensive ingredients are placed together, but are incomplete, you're not purchasing what your dog needs—every day—to stay healthy.

Know what you're purchasing. The milligrams (mg), micrograms (mcg), and International Units (IU) should be listed next to the ingredient on the label. This tells you exactly what's in the bottle. The source of the ingredient and the quality of the ingredient are also important factors because the vitamins and minerals need to be in a form that your dog can assimilate and absorb. For example, calcium isn't absorbed well when the source is bone meal. *Calcium is best absorbed from an acidic formulation or as a water-soluble calcium from leafy greens.* Brewer's yeast, an inexpensive byproduct of the beer brewing industry, is often used for B vitamins, but it is not a quality source and is high on the list of common allergens for dogs. Dogs may like the taste of brewer's yeast, and owners

may like that it's inexpensive, but there are much better sources of B vitamins available. Of all the corners to be cut in finances, health should never be one.

Ingredients can also vary in their activity levels. As one example, cranberry can have activity levels ranging from 10 percent to 70 percent, but the milligrams noted on the bottle will be the same. (Think of it as two laptop computers that look identical. While both look the same and may even perform similar tasks, one has more internal power to run faster and longer. If your quality of life depended on these computers, you would obviously choose the more powerful one.) If a supplement bottle states its dosage as 50mg of cranberry and that ingredient is 70 percent active, its effectiveness will be much better than a 50mg bottle with only 10 percent active cranberry. The rub is that you can't discern this from a label. The best way to get around this is to purchase from a reputable company or to study the difference the product makes in your pet's health and vitality. Her coat's

shine and her increased energy level will be among the indicators of quality supplementation.

My 123s of supplementation, as a starting block, are (1) a multivitamin and mineral supplement given once daily with food, (2) a green supplement containing chlorophyll, and (3) an omega-3 fatty acid supplement or an oil supplement (such as olive oil, flaxseed oil, hemp or coconut oil). The best supplement would be one designed with canine-specific needs in mind that also provides enough supplementation to help prevent common diseases and detoxify the cells of everyday environmental pollutants. Dogs, unlike humans, can create their own Vitamin C. But in today's toxic world some extra C in a supplement helps to detoxify the dog's body of chemicals and pesticides and also boosts the immune system.

In my 30 years of practice as a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine, I've studied the effects of supplementation on my patients. The incidence of cancer, along with many other diseases, has risen exponentially over my career. Of course, I wanted to figure out why and what could be done to prevent these diseases. Through my observations and analyses, I've discovered that, in addition to being exposed to so many more toxins, our dogs are not getting all the tools through diet and supplements their cells need on a daily basis. Selecting the right supplements can bring your dog's quality of life from *nutrition holes* to *whole nutrition*. Every dog deserves a healthy and long life, and I am a firm believer that supplementing your dog's diet with quality vitamins and minerals is the best life insurance you can buy. 🐾

For more information about canine health, including natural remedies to common ailments, healthy canine recipes, and other vital health topics, check out Dr. Khalsa's website (<http://doctordeva.com/>).
 Dr. Khalsa's Natural Dog: A Holistic Guide for Healthier Dogs is available online through Amazon and Barnes&Noble.

