



Holistic Nutrition For Pets – A brief explanation!

Firstly – what do we really mean by a Holistic Nutrition

The terms from Cambridge Dictionary

Holistic :

Adjective dealing with or treating the whole of something or someone and Not just a part:

Nutrition :

The substances that you take into your body as food and the way that they influence your health:

Thus **Holistic Nutrition** is about food for the whole body and how it influences the health of the person or animal consuming it!

We cannot talk about health without some reference to ill - health which is usually expressed **as Symptoms** - itchy skin, eczema, digestive upsets etc.

When we look at conventional health systems, the tendency is to try and suppress the symptoms with the use of drugs. The assumption being that once the symptoms disappear the problem or illness disappears. At Land Of Holistic Pets we see the symptoms in a similar way as you would look at a Tsunami. While the wave is the problem it only arose because of an earthquake. Thus the Tsunami is the **symptom** of the **earthquake!** Similarly, itchy skin, eczema, hot spots, waxy ears, tear stains, tooth tarter, chewing feet, anal gland problems and so on are really symptoms associated with some other cause and I believe this to be **diet – Just ask yourself what else other than food, water and air do living creatures take into their body on a daily basis?**

Making the connection between diet and health is not an easy one but if we think about how the consumption of a bottle of wine (or two) has on the body. It is not long before our coordination goes, our balance is impaired as is our judgement. The daily routine of too much salt or sugar in our diet on the other hand can take years to show up. Similarly, high levels of protein in our dogs and cats diet, over time will probably result in kidney problems but the time taken for it to happen is so long that the correlation is all but forgotten.

The impact of diet and its relationship to health is a difficult one to grasp but its impact can be as influential as the bottle of wine only more devastating in terms of overall well being and longevity.

Traditional Chinese Medicine sees all life as an interplay of energies - when the energies are in balance there is health, when they are out of balance there is illness. This is similar to that of a pond , when there are ripples it indicates imbalance - the greater the ripples or symptoms the greater the imbalance. These energies come from below and above - the earth provides nourishment through food while the heavens provide light and heat. What we must do in terms of holistic nutrition is balance these energies and provide the correct conditions for health to prevail.

When these energies are out of balance the body has a wonderful mechanism for attempting to redress the imbalances. It could and has been referred to as the Doctor within you!

If you cut your finger, the body will attempt to stop the flow of blood by clotting it. It will then attempt to repair the wound and at worst, leave only a scar. If you twist your ankle, the body will induce inflammation and swelling to protect the area of damage! A fever is the bodies way of quickly dispelling toxic material! Thus, we can see that the body has powerful inbuilt healing mechanisms.

Thus, I believe that the symptoms as mentioned above, are the bodies healing mechanisms at play and are attempts to rid the body of waste material. That is - **Disease is actually an attempt by the body to get healthy!**

Since food is one of the major issues we have control over and health or disease results from it, we must seriously consider it to be the 'cause' of many of the symptoms we see in both ourselves and our pets! **Thus proper Holistic Nutrition has to be the way to aid the body in its attempt to get healthy!**

There are many claims to the term 'holistic' ranging from healthy ingredients to quoting some of the principles of Natural Health Care but none of them explain what really constitutes a holistic diet formulated for health or how they balance the energies of life!

The following gives a brief if not simplistic explanation of how a proper holistic diet should be formulated for health. This approach draws on the principle of Traditional Chinese Medicinal approaches to diet and health.

We need to consider 4 major areas in formulating a good holistic diet.

1. Quality of the Ingredients and the impact of processing
2. Thermal nature of the ingredients
3. Acid/Alkaline impact on the body
4. Excesses and deficiencies

1. Quality of the ingredients and the impact of processing

The following table shows the loss of nutrients when whole wheat is refined to white flour

Mineral	Loss (%)	Other Nutrients	Loss (%)
Calcium	60	Strontium	95
Chromium	40	Zinc	78
Cobalt	89	Vitamins B1, 2 & 3	81
Copper	68	Vitamin B6	72
Iron	76	Pantothenic acids	50
Magnesium	85	Folacin	67
Manganese	86	Linoleic acid	95
Phosphorous	71	Alpha- linoleic acid	95
Potassium	77	Protein	33
Selenium	16	Fibre	95

Source : Erasmus " Fats that heal and Fats that Kill"

The above table shows that we have losses ranging from 16 - 95% of nutrient value of whole wheat. These figure basically represent how white flour compared to whole wheat is highly deficient in nutritional value.

Now let's look at some of the nutrient losses associated with other foods.

The following table shows losses of minerals and vitamins when food is processed from what constitutes its whole food form to its refined form.

Whole Food	Refined Food	Loss (%)
Brown Rice	White rice	26 – 83
Corn	Corn Starch	31 – 100
Sugar	White sugar	83 – 100
Milk	Fat Free Milk	80 - 100

Source: Erasmus " Fats that heal and Fats that Kill"

Thus we can conclude that highly processed refined foods are deficient of many nutrients.

A proper Holistic Diet therefore should contain high quality whole foods and avoid chemicals like emulsifiers, flavours, colours and preservatives.

2 Thermal nature of the ingredients

Traditional Chinese Approaches tells us that foods have an impact on the body of hot, warm, cool , cold, dry or damp. Most foods are subjected to variations in their temperature during production, transport, storage, preparation and consumption, *e.g.*, pasteurisation, sterilisation, evaporation, cooking, freezing, chilling *etc.* Temperature changes cause alterations in the physical and chemical properties of food components which influence the overall properties of the final product, *e.g.*, taste, appearance, texture and stability and of course its influence in the body.

The following table gives a brief explanation of the thermal properties of various foods in terms of how they influence the body.

Neutral Foods	Warming Foods	Cooling Foods	Drying Foods	Damp Foods
Carrots	Lamb	Spinach	Beet Pulp	Fat/Oil
Lean chicken	Turkey	Fish	Barley	Dairy Products
Brown Rice	Red meat	Cucumber	Oats	Wheat

Why is this important – you might ask?

But as humans we do it almost without thinking – You eat salads in the summer – soups and stews in the winter. Our pets need to avoid extremes in terms of the thermal nature of foods and therefore if one ingredient has a warming effect, the overall diet should have a counterbalancing food which is cooling. Recurring Ear infections are, I believe, caused by the food creating a warm, damp, swampy like environment in the ear canal. The ear canal becomes a hot bed for bacterial overgrowth, similarly with the anal glands.

3 Acid / Alkaline impact on the body

The term used to define this relationship is the pH level – Potential Hydrogen

Too much Hydrogen (acid forming) means not enough Oxygen.

Acid Forming Foods	Alkaline Forming Foods
Saturated fats	Spinach
Dairy products	Carrots
Meat	Green Beans
Brown Rice	Millet

It is vitally important that there is a proper ratio between acid and alkaline foods in the diet. The natural ratio in a normal healthy body is approximately 4 to 1 -- four parts alkaline to one part acid, or 80% to 20%. When such an ideal ratio is maintained, the body has a strong resistance against disease. Pet foods generally are very acid in their formulation and tend to be problematic over the life time of our pets.

4. Excesses and deficiencies

Excesses – Too much - Protein, fat, salt and sugar.

Protein – Excess is converted by the body to nitrogen waste which is excreted in the urine – however if the kidneys are doing this on a daily basis, year in, year out – potential for kidney problems.

Fat - Very sweet – and increases palatability but excess tend to create warm and very damp conditions in the body. Clogs up and slows the digestive system.

Salt – increases palatability however it is very alkaline forming in the body but excessive use of it is dangerous.

Most disease or imbalances involve acidic blood conditions. Salt on the other hand is very alkaline forming – This is why you see heavy meat eaters pouring on the salt and is craved by those with very acid bodies. Excessive use leads to calcium depletion, which in turn damages the heart, arteries, nerves, bones, kidneys and muscles.

Sugar -. The body needs it but when we refine it! - too much of it in the wrong form is dangerous. Whether it is called Fructose, Sucrose, Corn syrup It passes so quickly into the system it shocks the stomach and the pancreas – it very quickly becomes acidic and helps to consume the minerals. Calcium is lost from the system and the digestive system becomes weak. In large amounts it leads to obesity, hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, heart disease immune deficiency and so on!!

Deficiencies

Highly processed foods like Corn Gluten meal, Derivatives of a vegetable origin (whatever they are) , , by-products of the human food industry or the bio-fuels industry – Sugar Beet pulp, the poor quality protein sources - derivatives of an animal origin (Leave that one to your imagination) offer very little in the way of nutrition and may in fact contribute to ill health. Sugar beet pulp is very drying in the body and can often be seen accompanying high levels of Fat (very damp forming). I believe such a combination actually contributes to pancreatitis.

Conclusions

When we pull this approach together we have a fairly comprehensive approach to holistic nutrition.

We look at the Proteins, Carbohydrates and the Fats

Take into account – the quality of those ingredients,

The Thermal impact on the body

The Acid/Alkaline relationship

And the potential for Excesses and Deficiencies

We have a complex inter-relationship and based on our present knowledge – a holistic Approach to health and vitality.

Thus Holistic Nutrition is much more than Marketing Hype – it is in fact a very complex and rewarding approach to feeding dogs but beware – it is being used as Marketing Hype.

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