



SEVEN HOME REMEDIES FOR YOUR DOG

— My Pet MD

When you're feeling under the weather, you might find that the perfect thing for treating what ails you is something you already have in the kitchen. Did you know that you can use similar, simple home remedies to treat allergies in dogs, ailments in dogs and other canine annoyances, too? Below you will find seven great natural remedies for making your dog happy and healthy again, whether they are suffering from allergies, dehydration, fleas and more.

1. Vitamin E for Dogs with Dry Skin

Have you ever wondered how to treat dry skin on dogs? Vitamin E is good for preventing those pesky age lines on your face, and it's also great for your dog's dry skin. You can give your pup a doggy massage by applying vitamin E oil directly to the skin, a soaking bath with vitamin E added to the water, or you can go all "Hollywood" and pop your dog a pill (of vitamin E, that is).

If you give the vitamin orally, *check with your vet on the recommended dosage for your specific dog breed.*

2. Electrolyte—Replacing Liquids for Diarrhea and Vomiting

Flavorless electrolyte-replacing liquids, such as sports waters or pediatric drinks, not only help athletes to replenish fluids and babies to rehydrate after an illness, they can also supply your sick pooch's body with much needed fluids after a bout of diarrhea or vomiting.

Consult your veterinarian as to the *appropriate dosage amounts when giving these types of liquids to your dog.*

3. Yogurt and Acidophilus for Dogs

Plain yogurt is a healthy treat for your dog. Just as with humans, the live acidophilus in the yogurt keeps the good bacteria in your dog's intestines in balance, so that bad bacteria is swiftly knocked out. If your dog is on antibiotics, a little yogurt (fed at a much later time...away from the antibiotic) will also help keep yeast infections at bay (a common side-effect of antibiotic treatment). You can also give your dog acidophilus pills—wrapping the pills in bacon is strictly optional.

Puppies are especially prone to yeast infections, so a little plain yogurt as a snack (or even dessert) can help keep things in balance; especially useful while the intestinal system is building immunities. ↗

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4. Chamomile Tea for Dogs

Chamomile tea uses the natural disinfecting effects of the chamomile plant to settle upset doggy tummies. It is recommended for colic, gas and anxiety. It can also alleviate minor skin irritations. Just chill in the fridge and spray onto the affected area on the dog's raw skin. Your dog should feel an immediate soothing effect as the chilled tea kills the yeast and/or bacteria on the skin. A warm (*not hot*) tea bag can also be used for soothing infected or irritated eyes

5. Oatmeal to Stop Your Dog from Itching

An itchy dog can be quite an annoyance, especially as it goes around scratching itself on any piece of furniture it can reach. But don't blame your dog, sometimes they're itchy because of allergies and can't help but to scratch. If your pup is itchy, forget the backscratcher! Finely ground oatmeal is a time-honored remedy for irritated skin. You can use baby oatmeal cereal or grind it yourself in a food processor. Stir the oatmeal into a bath of warm water and let your dog soak in the healing goodness. Your dog will thank you. Dogs with skin allergies, infections and other diseases which cause itchiness have been shown to gain immediate relief with this approach, too.

6. Epsom Salt Bath for Dogs' Wounds

Dogs can be like kids at times, and as such they are bound to suffer from wounds and the occasional unexplained swelling. Try treating these ailments with Epsom salt soaks and heat packs next time. A bath consisting of Epsom salt and warm water can help reduce the swelling and the healing time, especially when combined with prescribed antibiotics and veterinary supervision. *Be sure that your pet does not ingest Epsom salt, however, as it can be very harmful. Also, do not bathe your pet in Epsom salt if there are open wounds.*

If soaking your dog in an Epsom salt bath twice a day for five minutes isn't convenient or practical, a homemade heat pack using a clean towel drenched in the same warm-water solution can be applied to wounds for the same effect.

7. Flea Home Remedies

Does your dog have fleas? Some dogs are allergic to flea bites and just one can cause them to itch for days. Never fear. Before turning to the big guns, try some borax powder. The standard stuff at the store will work wonders on fleas by poking holes in their crunchy insect exoskeletons. A good way to make sure those parasitic suckers get annihilated is to sprinkle the borax on your floor, and then sweep or vacuum up the excess. The invisible borax crystals left behind will kill the fleas and you won't even have to lift a finger. It's inexpensive and practically non-toxic compared to an appointment with

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the exterminator, just make sure that your dog *does not ingest any borax*.

To relieve the dog's allergies and repel fleas in its fur, try a simple solution of lemon water. Fleas are repelled by citrus, so this can work both as a flea preventive, and for making your dog smell clean and refreshing. A useful solution can be made by pouring boiled water over lemons and allowing them to steep over night. This solution can then be applied all over your dog's skin using a fresh spray bottle. And, the tried and true Brewer's yeast method cannot be left out. Brewer's yeast can be given as part of a regular diet in powdered form, sprinkled over the dog food, or in tablet form, perhaps wrapped in a small slice of bacon or cheese.

Home (or holistic) remedies aren't just for tree huggers anymore. It's important to take care of your dog from day to day, not just when it's feeling a little under the weather, and the best way to maintain the best health is often the most natural way. But most of all, it'll help keeping your "baby" from crying like a hound dog. □



How To Set Up A Herding Day Event

by David M. Kelly

The Southern California Shetland Sheepdog Club decided that a Herding Day would be a great fun day so my sister Elizabeth set out to organize it. If your club is considering putting on a Herding Day for your members or as a recruiting event here are a few tips for planning and operations. If your club wants to be able to issue Herding Instinct Certificates then you'll need to coordinate with the AKC otherwise you can set your own rules.

The biggest task will be to locate sheep, a trainer and a location. Many trainers have their own sheep and property to host a small event. Others don't have the space either for parking or people.

Sheep

You will need several small herds of sheep of three or four heads. You will need to rotate the herds as they get tired or heated. The warmer the weather conditions then more frequently you'll have to rotate the sheep. Trainers will usually group their sheep so they can match them with the experience of the dogs.

Once you know how many sheep you'll have available you can determine the number of dogs that can be tested. Plan on two fifteen minute runs per dog with an additional five minutes to enter and exit the ring. New dogs need two attempts in the ring spaced out by 30 minutes to an hour. Use your sign in roster to assign the dogs their order in the ring.

Location

Finding a suitable location can be a challenge if the instructor/sheep owner doesn't have the space to host the event. Look at local riding stables they usually have a riding rink for horses that could be used and have public restrooms or at least a place for port-a-potty. Fair grounds and schools with agriculture units are also good places to examine. All of these places would have holding pens for livestock. Things to keep in mind are: parking, seating, areas to set up dog pens, sheep pens, table space for food and drinks, restrooms/port-a-potty, and a parking for a truck and stock trailer. Ideally you would host the

event at the same location where the sheep are housed as there is additional expense in transporting the sheep.

Parking

Parking can quickly become a challenge especially if a family member has a disability making it difficult to walk long distances or in a wheelchair that's not equipped to roll over rough terrain. Plan on one 18' x 9' space for every guest that will be arriving.

Toilets

If the site you select doesn't have a built in restroom then you'll need to rent a port-a-potty. One port-a-potty can support ten people for one week. For a one day event one unit would be enough for 70 people. You will also need a hand washing station. You will be handling livestock, animal waste and other hygiene requirements. An ADA port-a-potty can only support a few people compared to a standard port-a-potty. When you have people sign up for the event ask if they need an ADA port-a-potty. For events that are held at the instructor's home they are not required to make their bathrooms ADA compliant.

Food

A standard 3'x 6' table will be enough space to provide donuts and sign-in for the morning and lunch in the afternoon. Keeping things hot or cold can be a challenge without power. A standard ice chest with ice works fine even in 120 degree heat. Propane cook stoves are great for heating up coffee or chili.

Safety

There are several aspect of safety that you'll need to address. What to do in the event of a medical emergency, safety of the livestock and working with the livestock, dog safety. Before the event starts decide on who will call 9-1-1, who will go to the road and escort in the paramedics, who will provide first-aid, how to handle the dogs who might over react when they see paramedics working on

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their master. If a person is taken to the hospital who will take care of their dogs and coordination for getting their car home. Anything can happen from a dog bite, heart attack or stroke. Your sign-in roster will also serve as your evacuation roster. If there is a natural disaster, fire, a fuel tanker overturns and burst into flames and you need to evacuate. Set up a rally point and use the sign in roster to make sure everyone is accounted for.

The Safety Brief

On the day of the event gather everyone together. Brief them on your emergency plans, check to see who has a phone, who knows CRP. Then have the instructor give a safety brief on how to work with the stock and the procedure for entering and exiting the arena.

First-aid

First-aid the most likely event will be bites, cuts, broken fingers, heat injuries or hyperthermia. Have a well-stocked first aid kit at the ready, along with a thick blanket to use for shock or hyperthermia.

Dogs

Dogs will get overheated and need water. Have several water pans available not everyone will remember to bring water or their pans get kicked over. Additionally you'll want a small kiddie swimming pool that you can fill with a few inches of water for the dogs to stand in and cool their feet.

Teaching

Right after the safety brief is the best time for a short class and demonstration on herding. Get the dogs close to the fence

so they can watch and learn from the pros. Dog learn by watching other dogs.

Cost

This event will take a full day from the instructor's point of view, which means you need to sell out the event. Plan on running two rings for six hours that would equal about 20 dogs. The average cost for this size of an event would be \$1000.00 (fifty dollars a dog), add \$10.00 to cover the cost of food, trash bags, etc. You want to keep the price affordable sixty dollars for a full day of fun with your dog and friends is a bargain compared to a night at the movies.

Maps and Road Signs

Make it easy for people to find the event. Printed maps from the internet or club mailer are the best, not everyone has a GPS or can hear the electronic voice over a barking dog. You will also want some road signs for people to watch for. Event sites that are out in the country can be difficult to find even with a map and GPS. For our event we made 2 foot plywood Sheltie cutouts with directional arrows that we placed at key locations and turns.

Trash and Waste Disposal

This event will generate trash from paper plates, cups, soda cans and animal waste. Make it easy on people to dispose of their trash and have several 30-gallon trash bags hung at various locations and switch them out as they fill up. Let everyone know where the pooper scoopers are and where to dump the droppings. At the end of the event either throw in the back of someone's truck or find a dumpster. If you're hosting the event at the instructor's home they may not be able to dispose of a large amount of trash so be prepared to divide up the bags for people to take home. ☐

Berserk Behavior



by Nel Liquorman, Nutrition Editor
TheDogPress.com

Estrogen inhibitors and excitotoxins in pet foods cause reproductive problems, infertility, and hyperactive, aberrant behavior!

Certain dog food ingredients can cause unprovoked aggression, excessive barking, nervous pacing, and behavioral problems which medical doctors would term Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

One cat owner reported her cats "went crazy" when she changed cat food. A long-time breeder who feeds dry kibble said her dogs became hyperactive while gaining weight at the same time. As questions mounted, all seemingly related, I did hours of in-depth research which resulted in some very ↗

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disturbing answers.

Behavioral problems, particularly aggression and hyperactivity, may be caused by excitotoxins in the food. Behavioral abnormalities have escalated in both humans and animals, from rampant Alzheimer's disease to raging elephants to uncontrollable family pets.

The science of excitotoxicity will amaze you! Many pet foods also contain additives which act as estrogen-blockers and cause frustrating problems for cat and dog breeders.

Fertility and Reproduction

Estrogen Inhibitor Oils: Many pet foods are now touted as rich in Omega 3 oils from wild salmon and other oily fish, along with cruciferous plant substances including flax seeds, oil from flax seeds, broccoli, and rapeseed oil (renamed Canola). Oil from hemp, a cruciferous plant which is 80% fatty acid, is also being sold as a supplement for dogs and cats. All these substances are natural estrogen inhibitors, plus they interfere with thyroid hormone production and with many prescription drugs.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D in pet food is just more oil from fish and **Vitamin D3** is specifically from Cod Oil which contains especially high

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levels of vitamin A. What is the significance of high levels of vitamin A? High levels of "A" are known to cause **ii Hypervitaminosis A** with side effects ranging from skin problems to birth defects.

Cruciferous vegetables, extremely healthy for humans, have been used in hundreds of cancer studies. Since 2004, cancer doctors have been telling patients to add such vegetables to their diets because they are beneficial to overall health and are believed to aid in combating the disease. But controlled studies, such as at the University of Illinois at Urbana, found that extracts of cruciferous vegetables act as **anti-estrogen** and **estrogen antagonists**. These findings were published in 2000 by the American Chemical Society. Other university studies are available and indications are that over 300 studies with similar results took place.

Mercury: High concentrations of **methyl mercury**, an organic form of mercury, have been found in Omega 3 from fish oils rendered from large, long-lived ocean fish. Mercury is a **neurotoxin** (as in vaccine-associated autism). Symptoms include vision impairment, lack of coordination and numbness which can lead to seizures and death. High levels are common in wild salmon.

PCBs and Fish Oil: Earlier this year there were lawsuits due to polychlorinated biphenyl compounds (once used in the electrical industry) found in nearly a dozen different fish oil supplements. Just over thirty years ago, the EPA banned PCBs from the USA but this chemical (which causes **cancer** and **reproductive toxicity**) is still found in fish from which the oil is extracted.

The Mayo Clinic website had the following to say about fish oils: "There is evidence from multiple studies supporting intake of recommended amounts of DHA and EPA in the form of dietary fish or fish oil supplements...however, high doses may have harmful effects, such as an increased risk of bleeding."

It should be noted that fish oil, cruciferous plants and excitotoxins from MSG are not included in the AAFCO requirements published in 2008, yet they are added to many pet foods. Pet food manufacturers are just following "health trend hype."

According to researchers, **Omega 6** found in vegetable oils, including corn and safflower, increase estrogen activity but these oils are also thought to be pro-inflammatory. Canola oil (an estrogen inhibitor) is also believed to be pro-inflammatory.

ii Soybeans have moved into the top ten **allergen** list in the human population. It is hard to find soybean listed on human food labels as, like MSG, it masquerades under many aliases. It is harder still to pinpoint in cat or dog food list of ingredients. We can however, expect some of these **ii Soy Allergy Symptoms** to manifest in our pets. In addition, for well over 20 years, soybean in pet food has been linked to **bloat (gastric torsion)** in dogs. This is not simple gas; torsion is a crisis situation that requires immediate emergency vet care.

Soy protein isolate (ISP) is a source of textured vegetable protein (TVP). That sounds good but soy actually hinders protein digestion and causes red blood cells to stick together interfering with oxygen intake.

In addition to direct allergic reactions, it is widely reported that an alkaline solution is used to remove fibers from the ↗

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soybeans. Fibers are acid washed in aluminum tanks believed to leach aluminum, a heavy metal that we may be absorbing and ingesting from other sources as well. **Aluminum toxicity** has a wide range of symptoms including colic, rickets, gastrointestinal problems, nervousness, anemia, headache, speech problems, memory loss, softening of bones, weak/aching muscles, liver and kidney function decline; the list grows yearly.

You should also be aware that MSG and other flavorings are added to human and pet foods to cover up the soybean taste but labels usually state only "natural flavoring."

Marigold extract is considered a folk remedy for skin conditions which must be why some pet food makers are including it in their recipes even though the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) does not consider marigold a nutritional need for cats and dogs.

Marigold extract (calendula) contains lutein. In the human population, lutein supplements can cause a tightening effect on the uterus and are not recommended while breast-feeding. Animal studies indicate that marigold/lutein is **toxic to sperm** and may adversely affect **fertilized eggs**. Symptoms of too much lutein include indigestion, chest pain, heartburn, dizziness, blurred vision, eye irritation, skin discoloration, and difficulty swallowing and there may be evidence of renal and liver overload. Marigold's best use is probably as a natural pesticide ingredient!

Aggressive, Hyperactive or Obsessive Behavior

Dog trainers, therapists and behaviorists are multiplying almost as fast as canine behavioral problems. Even carefully bred, perfectly raised puppies turn into uncontrollable, destructive pets that often wind up at the local shelter. Loving house cats may suddenly exhibit the same behavior. Some veterinarians, at a loss for explanation, blame it on the old standby—genetics. Obviously that does not explain the crossbreeds and mutts that are affected.

Excitotoxins: Sounds like a mad scientist made up that name but **ii Excitotoxicity** isn't new. I knew about the often misdiagnosed side effects in human foods. I wondered, could a wide range of excitotoxins be in cat and dog food and could they cause uncharacteristic out-of-control behavior in dogs and cats? Most of the known adverse effects are related to the human population, presumably because no one has studied this in animals, but I believe the effect on our pets can be even greater.

According to Dr. Russell Blalock (well known neurosurgeon, author, lecturer, and nutritionist), hidden MSG and many other specious ingredients are excitotoxins, which quite literally excite cells to death. Brain studies were in the human population but effects on pets would be more significant due to an animal's lack of inhibition.

MSG — monosodium glutamate: Most people now recognize the risk of MSG in human foods, particularly in "prepared" foods. Many products proudly proclaim "no MSG" on the packaging, but in many cases there is **hidden MSG** in what the label refers to as "natural flavor". What you may not realize is that monosodium glutamate (MSG) has become common in pet foods and is believed

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to be mildly addictive to more than the taste buds. Dogs and cats “taste” food through their olfactory senses but they **ingest MSG** just as we do and can therefore be equally affected.

MSG causes hyperactivity and behavioral aberrations in the human population and while studies have yet to be done, we can extrapolate that to our formerly mild mannered pets.

Once referred to as “hidden MSG” (due to that additive’s pseudonyms) the following ingredients were identified by a leading research group as being **excitotoxins**: gelatin, calcium caseinate, textured protein, sodium caseinate, yeast nutrient, autolyzed yeast, hydrolyzed protein, carrageenan, maltodextrin, malt extract, natural food flavoring, broth, ultra-pasteurized (when containing additives), soy sauce extract, whey protein concentrate, pectin, and anything protein fortified, enzyme modified or seasoned.

These additives are in everything from soup to ice cream, and increasingly found in dog and cat foods. Since the industry keeps coming up with new names, our best advice is: if you don’t know what an ingredient is, research to make sure that it is not hidden MSG.

You may not reduce the risk of cat or dog food additives by using human foods. For example, feeding your pet raw or cooked chicken you buy for your family may not be a good idea. Check the wrapper again. If the chicken contains “broth” it probably contains excitotoxins. Associated Press reports that 30% of U.S. chickens are injected with additives that represent up to 15% of the meat’s weight. This process is called “plumping” and it is used to make former “factory farm” laying hens” more marketable. It may also be used simply to tip the scales a bit!

One particular brand, Perdue, uses broth containing “2% or less sea salt, carrageenan, xanthan gum, vinegar and natural flavor.” **Carrageenan** and the **natural flavor** are the culprits. Natural flavor can be anything from MSG to rosemary (a neurotoxin) to soy (affects estrogen production). In addition, this broth doubles or triples the sodium content. These additives, like many others contained in pet and human food are hidden MSG, now known as excitotoxins.

When several pets have the same personality or health changes occurring at the same time, it is not coincidental. Unless you have moved, installed new carpet, treated the lawn, etc. it is almost certain to be a result of something that should not be in their food. For now, we can only say read the label. It is time for the FDA to do its job and to insist on plain English identification of all food additives whether for human consumption or in pet foods.

Oprah Winfrey exposed the food industry and our addiction to fake foods in her August 2010 show. As Oprah observed “non-fat foods make you FAT!” While her authoritative guests did not go in depth on additives, the message was clear. Today’s food supply can be downright harmful to your health.

It would be wise for pet food companies to rethink what they are adding to their products. The cat is out of the bag. This information will be read by a quarter-million pet owners this month. It is going to become harder to market pet food contaminated by unneeded, unwanted, and potentially dangerous ingredients! ☐



NEED TO SWITCH YOUR PET’S FOOD?

by Dr. Amy Farcas, DVM, DACVN

If you need to change your pet’s diet, make sure the switch to his new food is gradual.

Your veterinarian has recommended a diet change for your pet. Easy, right? Maybe not. It may seem daunting, but here are a few steps you can take to successfully switch over to a new food or way of feeding.

1. Go Slow

Any two diets will have differences between them—even if these differences are subtle. These differences are probably why your veterinarian recommended the diet change in the first place. This change may affect your pet’s response to the new diet, as well as the response of his or her digestive system. Just like people, the digestive systems of pets contain a number of normal intestinal bacteria that help with the digestive process. When a diet change is made, your pet’s system is receiving a new formulation of nutrients that could cause a shift in the numbers and types of beneficial intestinal bacteria. These shifts are usually subtle but may be noticeable if they happen quickly. For example, a new diet that is higher in fat or has a different amount of dietary fiber could contribute to soft stools or gas if the change is not made slowly. This doesn’t mean the diet won’t work, only that a more gradual change may be needed to allow the bacteria time to adjust. For this reason, diet changes should usually be made over a period of at least a week. And if your pet vomits, has persistent diarrhea or gas, refuses to eat or seems lethargic, call your veterinarian.

2. Choose the Right Time and Place

Pets rely heavily on their sense of smell and connect the scent of a diet with how they feel when they smell the food. For that reason, sick pets may associate feeling poorly with the diet offered at the time, causing a food aversion (reluctance or refusal to eat the food). If this happens, the pet may be unlikely to eat that diet later. For this reason, it’s best to make diet changes once pets are discharged from the hospital and feeling better. If a diet change absolutely has to be made before your pet has recovered, check with your veterinarian on how to achieve this for long-term success.

How, when and where your pet is fed can also affect your pet’s willingness to eat a new diet. It is best to feed your pet in a quiet area without other pets around so that he or she will not be distracted or feel the need to compete for food. If pets need to be fed different diets, it’s best to keep them separated during meal times.

3. Strategize

Diet change works better as a deliberate process. Several strategies can be effective.

Some pets need time to accept a new diet as “not new any-

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more" before they try it. At mealtime, offer the new and the old diets in separate bowls. When meals are done, throw out the uneaten portion of the new diet. This seems wasteful, but it's important. The food's smell and texture changes as it is exposed to air, so offering fresh food at each meal is more attractive than offering leftovers. After a week, gradually decrease the amount of the old diet and increase the amount of the new diet, until your pet is fully transitioned to the new diet. You may also make the new diet more attractive by adding a bit of something extra-tasty—although check with your veterinarian first before adding anything to make sure it is safe for your pet and whatever his or her medical condition is. Once the transition is done, decrease the amount of the extra item until it is eliminated.

Another strategy is mixing the two diets together, starting with 90 percent of the old diet and 10 percent of the new diet, with a gradual shift in proportions each day until your pet is fully transitioned to the new diet. Again, adding a bit of something extra-tasty (check with your veterinarian) may make the transition easier. This item can be withdrawn gradually once the transition is complete.

4. Monitor Your Pet's Weight

Your veterinarian should let you know how much of the new diet your pet should be eating each day and whether he or she should stay at the same weight, gain or lose weight. If weight gain or loss is the plan, guidelines for how much your pet's weight should change per week or month and how to adjust the amount to feed each day to achieve these goals, are also needed. Sometimes pets eat less during the diet transition, which is usually not cause for alarm. If you notice this, discuss it with your veterinarian and be able to describe how much of each diet your pet is actually eating. This helps your veterinarian to decide if changes to your pet's feeding plan need to be made.

5. Prepare Yourself

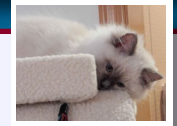
Now you've seen that making a diet change isn't necessarily simple. To help make it successful, make a plan. Decide how you will monitor your pet's intake of the new diet, how much of the new diet you will need to purchase at a time, where you will purchase the new diet (some therapeutic diets are available only through veterinary hospitals or with a prescription) and when you will have to re-order it. Also, think about how feeding will change for your other pets. Free-feeding is common in multi-pet households, so changing one pet's ↗

("Need To Switch Your Pet's Food?" cont.)

diet generally means that either all pets will change or that pets can't be allowed to eat each other's food.

Keep in mind that the change is important for your pet's health, so continuing to feed your pet's old diet may not be recommended.

If you foresee or have difficulties with making a diet change, such as a pet who absolutely refuses to eat the new diet, discuss your concerns with your veterinarian. □



Cat Behaviors and Their Meanings

Midnight wind sprints, lying across your laptop (while you're using it), knocking your things over—repeatedly. That's right, it's me: your kitty cat. I know, I know: the way I behave can leave you wondering whether I'm ornery, needy or just plain out to get you. But usually I'm just trying to communicate a want or need, express an emotion or let you know I'm not feeling well. Understanding the subtleties of cat behavior can be difficult for you humans. But you mean well (you're also my only source of food), which is why I'm going to help you get inside my little kitty brain. So grab my favorite treats and curl up while I explain some of the most common and baffling feline behaviors, including cat body language, cat vocalization and how cats interact with things and places.

Cat Body Language

We felines are extremely expressive creatures; we're just not as obvious (and, let's be honest, slobbery) as dogs. But you have to know how to read us. Some solid starting points are:

- **Ears:** If my ears are forward or up, I'm happy, alert or engaged. Ears sideways, flat or backwards means I'm feeling annoyed, mad or afraid. Rotating ears means I'm listening and taking everything in.
- **Tail:** If my tail is straight up, I'm happy, curious or alert. Straight up and twitching, I'm either really excited or happy or I might be about to spray (if I'm not spayed or neutered). Tail waving back and forth (or thumping on the ground) means I'm irritated; more waving means greater irritation (humans beware!). Tail low or between my legs means I'm nervous or insecure.
- **Kneading (milk-treading):** I learned to do this when I was a kitten, to get milk from my mom. When I do it now it means I'm happy. I might even feel inspired to do some air-kneading. Try not to die from cuteness if I do this.
- **Belly facing up:** I trust you and I'd like some attention, perhaps a bit of a belly rub; though I might swat at you playfully.
- **Arching back while being petted:** I like that you're petting me. More, please.
- **Swatting when you pet my head:** I love it when you pet me. But I hate it when your hand comes in front of and over my face; it feels threatening, so I might swat at you. Reach from the side or behind me if you want to pet the top of my head or jowls.
- **Walking with body turned sideways:** I feel threatened and I'm trying to make myself look bigger; the fur on my tail might be puffed up, too. I'll probably only do this when I meet an unfamiliar animal but a human could set me off, too.

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("Cat Behaviors and Their Meanings." cont.)

Cat Vocalization

Not only do I have many ways of putting the "me" in "meow," I also make a lot of other noises that communicate how I'm feeling. So developing a good ear is important for understanding cat behavior. Keep in mind that if I'm Siamese, I might be more vocal than the average feline. These are the most common sounds you'll hear from me:

• **Purring:** I'm happy and there's a good chance you're petting me while I purr. Sometimes I purr to soothe myself if I'm anxious.

• **Meowing:** After kitten hood, we cats don't tend to meow at each other. So when I meow, it's my way of talking to you. If you pay attention, you'll get to know my special meows. If it sounds like I'm whining, I probably am (for food, to go out, for some attention). A short meow when you come home is my way of greeting you and inviting you to say "hi" back.

• **Yowling:** This is a long, drawn out meow and I'll probably only do it if I'm not spayed or neutered and in heat (you should really look into getting me fixed!).

• **Chattering:** When I see something I want to chase, like a bug or a bird, but I can't get to it (blasted windows!), I'll make a chattering sound because I'm excited or frustrated.

• **Hissing:** I'm angry about or afraid of something.

How Cats Interact With Things and Places

In general, I'm not comfortable with new environments. I like things to be predictable. But...did I mention that I also get bored easily and need stimulation? Hey: I never said cat behavior makes sense! So while unfamiliar places can make me anxious, I often like it when new things are brought into my territory. Like that new, really big cat bed you bought just for me. What did you call it? Oh, yes: a couch. Here are some examples of how I interact with my environment and the things in it:

• **Rubbing against things:** I'm a cat, so being territorial is like breathing. When I rub up against things (you included), I'm using the scent glands on my face to mark them as mine.

• **Sitting on things you think I shouldn't:** You sit on the couch, I sit on the newspaper you're trying to read. What's the problem? All I'm trying to do is let you know that I want some attention. You should be glad I like you as much as I do.

• **Knocking things over:** Like I said: I get bored, but you know what's always fun to see in action? Gravity! So odds are good that if I'm on an elevated spot and you put something small (a pen, pack of gum, maybe even a glass) near me, I'll knock it to the floor. It's science in action!

• **Running indoors:** If you don't let me outside or take me for walks, this is just my way of burning off some energy.

• **Hiding:** Sometimes I feel shy, especially if unfamiliar people come over, or maybe I'm mad because you tried to give me medicine or you scolded me. And...I might hide because I'm not feeling well, so please come find me if I'm gone for a long time and don't seem to be eating or drinking.

Now that you've got your paws on all this helpful information about understanding cat behavior, you and I are setup to have an even closer bond. Thanks for reading and being such a good cat parent! Now who else wants to take a nap? ☐

Amazing Cat Facts

- Cats are either right- or left-pawed (handed), showing a distinct preference for one paw over the other.
- When cats purr, it is an expression of intense emotion, meaning pleasure or pain.
- The domestic cat is the only feline that can hold its tail in a vertical position while walking, wild cats must hold the tail horizontally or tucked between their legs.
- A cat's sensitive whiskers can detect even slight changes in air pressure and air currents—giving the cat "radar" at night or insight of a storm about to come.
- The kitten's permanent teeth grow in between the ages of 12 to 18 weeks.
- The hunting instinct is buried deeply in the mind of even the youngest kittens. Rather than just eat its food, a kitten visually examines it and will paw at it, as it would an animal brought back from the hunt, to check if it is safe to approach.
- Cats are most active in the morning and evening (dawn and twilight)—the prime hunting hours.
- Cats, Camels and Giraffes walk with two right and two left legs.
- Humans have 206 bones in their bodies—an average cat has 244 bones. They have 60 vertebrae. Nearly 20 of these bones are located in the tail for flexibility.
- Cats have 517 muscles—enabling them to move the front and rear halves of their bodies in opposite directions.
- The cat has 26 facial expressions and the same parts of the human and feline brain correspond to emotion.
- Each ear is controlled by 32 muscles and can turn 180 degrees. Humans have only 6 muscles.
- A cat's sense of taste has only 473 taste buds compared to a human's 9,000. A cat's taste buds are located only on the tip of their tongue.
- Cats have 25% less taste buds than humans, and they have NO sweet tooth.
- A cat's heart beats two to three times faster than a human's. A cat's heart beats 150 to 210 per minute compared to a human's which is 60 to 80 beats per minute.
- In cold weather a cat's hair stands on end to trap a layer of air that acts as insulation, they have receptors at the tips of their fur to sense cold.
- Cats can tolerate temperatures up to 124° ☐





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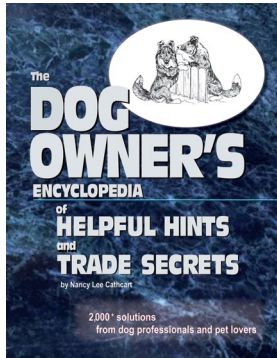
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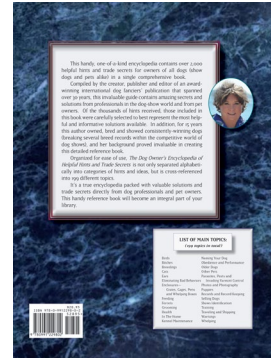
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