

## Natural Solutions to Your Cat's Health Problems

Today cat lovers the world over are turning more towards natural herbal remedies and nutritional supplements for common everyday health ailments affecting their feline family members.

A natural approach to our cat's health concerns is a viable adjunct to any conventional veterinarian approach. And, just as with humans, the use of herbs and dietary supplementation can benefit your cat in many ways where a more conventional approach, with associated risks and side effects might not.

While obviously having many anatomical differences and specific health concerns, many of the herbs that could be prescribed for a human can also be prescribed for cats and animals in general.

Most commonly herbal supplements are taken as liquid or powder that can easily be added to your cats' food or water. Dosages are relatively small so usually little resistance is encountered when administering a remedy or supplement.

What follows are a few of the more common conditions that can affect your cat that are easily treated at home with natural remedies. But as we are constantly reminded, if symptoms persist please see your doctor, or vet, as the case may be.

Flea allergies are a common complaint for cats. Cats with this specific allergy have a problem dealing with the saliva from the fleas bite. A single bite from a flea can create an allergy like reaction in your cat that can last for many days if not weeks.

Itching is the obvious issue here, with hair loss from scratching being a very common secondary problem. The conventional approach offers flea rinses and shampoos as well as internal medication and sometimes in severe cases a prescription medication is needed. While sometimes necessary, toxicity can be an issue with side effects often resulting.

But there is a lot that can be done naturally before things get to this point.

Typically you can apply Tea Tree oil to the site of the problem. Make sure you use an animal strength product. Oil that is too concentrated can cause sickness and possibly death from the oil your cat may ingest while grooming.

Today there are many animal related products that are available, so you won't have any problem getting an appropriate strength Tea Tree oil.

Internally Evening Primrose Oil (typically given in capsule form although it can be easily added to food) can be taken. Fish oil is another very useful supplement that has the added benefit of being used for years as a natural fur ball solution. Fish oil can be easily added to food.

Additionally, Aloe Vera gel can be very effective when applied to dry and scaly areas. And as a preventative to keep the biting bugs at bay, Garlic oil (1 capsule added to food: one per week) works very effectively.

With any skin problem we need to make sure that no further irritation occurs. Make sure to use only natural shampoos and soaps or soap alternatives (Sorbelen for example). Your health food store or vet will be able to help here.

Urinary tract infection (UTI) in cats is another common health concern. You can usually spot this by your cats' reluctance to use the litter tray. Here your cat has formed an association with painful urination and the litter tray. If your cat begins to urinate in unusual places, then it may be a symptom of this condition. To confirm the diagnosis you must get a urine sample analyzed.

There are several herbs that can be used to treat the painful inflammation and infection associated with this condition.

Couchgrass is a very powerful cleansing and tonifying herb that is often used in UTI. It has a strong anti-inflammatory and anti bacterial action and is a much used remedy for conditions such as urethritis and cystitis.

This remedy can be administered as a commercially prepared tincture or as a tea that in both cases can be easily added to food or water.

Alternatively you can use herbs such as Echinacea and Golden Seal that are renowned for their strong anti-biotic like action.

UTI in your cat can be a serious problem so be advised by your vet and get it diagnosed quickly if the remedies mentioned do not show some improvement within a few days.

Intestinal parasites (worms) are a common cause of digestive problems in cats. If you notice the appearance of small white seed like particles in your cats faeces, than you can be pretty sure your cat has tapeworms.

Roundworms also commonly occur in cats, and are usually easily spotted in your cats' vomit or faeces. In sufficient quantity, roundworm, can obstruct the intestine to the point of being life threatening.

A very common and effective treatment for parasites is Garlic oil. You can add the oil to cat food or you can also give fresh garlic by crushing a clove into the cat food. This can be used daily although 3-4 times a week is usually enough. Make sure to check for parasites in the faeces and to get to the vet if the problem persists.

For general, non-parasite based, digestive and bowel disturbances (vomiting and diarrhoea for example), powdered slippery elm bark is the remedy of choice.

Slippery elm lines the bowel and has a very calming affect on the whole gastro intestinal tract. It is a very cheap, easily obtained herb, and should be in all medicine cabinets.

At the first sign of any gut problem use of slippery elm bark will show an almost instant positive result.

We have only looked briefly here at a few of the main health concerns for cats. Whatever the health concern your cat may be experiencing, know that there are many, potentially very helpful, herbal remedies and nutritional supplements that can help without the side effects of many conventional drug medications.

Obviously this is not saying that veterinarian intervention is not needed, far from it. Strong medications and surgery are often needed to save the life of our cats.

What we need to do as cat owners is to learn as much as we can about our animals and the possible solutions that exist for their health problems. Part of that knowledgebase should be, not only a familiarity with basic preventative measures and natural remedies that can be used to stop small problems becoming big problems, but also the knowledge and understanding of what to do when these natural remedies do not work.

Fortunately for most of us the most pressing health concerns for our cats are quality of life issues rather than life threatening ones. By having a basic knowledge of natural remedies we can, not only help our cats feel better now, we can also possibly help prevent minor health concerns becoming major health issues.