

# Doing Detox

Just like us, our animals are constantly exposed to toxins in their food and environment. Here's how to help them back to wellness.

BY AUTUMN DROUIN, DVM

**M**ystie is a sweet six-year-old spayed female border collie/springer spaniel cross. She first came to our clinic on May 26, 2006. Her medical history was routine: puppy vaccines, spay, parasite prevention medication, annual boosters for rabies, distemper, hepatitis and kennel cough, with leptospirosis added in the past three years. She was on a medical weight-reducing diet. She had no illness, other than two ear infections that were treated with

a medicated ointment. But Mystie was slowing down. She showed less interest in her Frisbee, was more aloof, and her daily runs were becoming walks. Her owners put the change down to her age.

On examination, Mystie was found to have a mild doggy body odor despite good grooming. She also had a small amount of mucus and crusty discharge in the corners of her eyes, tartar accumulation on her upper molars, a little wax in both ears, and a soft, painless, easily moveable growth under the skin on her right thigh. Her coat was luster-

less with mild dandruff on her back, and she was 15% overweight.

Her blood tests were within normal limits and her heartworm and stool parasite tests were negative. We did distemper and parvovirus vaccine titers and they came back positive, indicating an antibody response to those vaccines. Mystie presented the typical picture of the "basically healthy but toxic dog" – in other words, declining health without overt pathology.

Mystie's guardians, who had always done what they believed best for their canine





*Vaccines:* Too many.

*Drugs:* Antibiotics, dewormers, heartworm and flea prevention products.

It's best to work directly with a holistic vet when starting your own dog or cat on a detox program.

### Detoxification to the rescue

Detoxification is how the body rids itself of poison, and is a process that's always taking place. Due to poor quality food, over-vaccination and other factors, the detoxification organs (the liver is the main one) become stressed. The process consequently becomes less efficient and needs assistance. In alternative medicine, detoxification is the extra support we give the body to help it carry out its natural detoxing process. It also helps with the breakdown of some of the toxins that the body can't get

companion, felt guilty that she showed signs of toxicity. I assured them we could begin to immediately reverse the situation.

### Why was Mystie toxic?

*Diet:* Mystie was eating a food that contained low quality ingredients as well as additives, hormones, pesticides, etc. The nutrition she was receiving was inadequate and unable to meet the

demands of energy expenditure, healing and detoxification.

*Environmental exposure:* Mystie's family lives in a new housing development adjacent to agricultural land. New houses are highly polluted while the chemicals in new building materials outgas. Pesticides on lawns and surrounding agricultural land are also a problem, as is air pollution.

Toxins are also normally produced in the body as byproducts of digestion and metabolism.

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# Hint:

It's difficult to predict which reactions may appear and for how long, although animals often detoxify through their weakest system. For example, an animal with skin problems will often detoxify through his skin.

These reactions occur as toxins drain out of the animal's body, so they aren't something to worry about unless they're severe. In that case, always consult your veterinarian, since this is not a normal part of detoxification.

If your animal is generally well, just give the detoxification process time; the dose can be reduced if necessary.

If your animal has an existing illness, however, consult a holistic veterinarian, as her/his ability to detoxify may be compromised and a different protocol may be required.

rid of on its own. It's important to do this because illness can result from accumulated toxins in the body.

Natural remedies such as homeopathic preparations, herbs, and nutritional supplements can be used to help an animal detox. Equally important is reducing toxic exposure; improving the diet is an essential part of the equation, as is limiting vaccines, drugs and environmental toxins. For Mystie, I used a basic protocol that I've utilized with hundreds of companion animals.

## General detox protocol

1. A grain-free home-prepared diet. The new diet begins with a "water only" fast (12 to 36 hours for dogs, maximum 12 hours for cats.)

## 2. Nutritional supplements:

- fish oil
- probiotic (Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifidobacteria)
- high quality vitamin/mineral supplement formulated for dogs (or cats if the patient is a cat)
- digestive enzymes

3. HEEL Detox Kit, to start after the diet is completely switched. The kit contains three homeopathic remedies, each of which supports cleansing and drainage:

- Nux-vomica Homaccord for the liver and gut
- Berberis Homaccord for kidneys and gall bladder
- Lyphosot for the lymphatic system

I generally recommend two to ten drops of each remedy daily; the dosage is based on weight. Add each to water bowl daily for three weeks, stop for one week, and repeat for another three weeks. If a pet won't drink water with the remedies, they can be dropped on food or in salmon juice.

## 4. Other:

- Weekly local application of diatomaceous earth for flea prevention

- Stool test for parasites rather than treat unnecessarily
- Limit exposure to vaccines, drugs and other chemicals


## What if there's a reaction?

It's not uncommon for an animal to have a reaction while detoxing. It may include an aggravation of existing symptoms, a recurrence of old ones and/or the development of new ones. Some examples are:

- Loose stools and/or mucus in stools for a few days to a few weeks (if watery or bloody consult a veterinarian)
- Discharge from the eyes
- Increased body odor and/or itchiness

## Revisiting Mystie

By July 15, Mystie's weight had dropped four pounds. Her coat was shiny and free of dandruff and odor. The growth, ear wax and dental tartar had improved 20% to 25%. Best of all, she was like a puppy again!

Like ourselves, animals are constantly exposed to toxic substances in their food and environment. Feeding your dog or cat a high quality premium diet made with whole, fresh ingredients and free of artificial preservatives, coloring and other chemicals, is an excellent start. Along with that, minimizing vaccines and exposure to toxins, along with a regular detoxification program (spring and fall) can help maintain or restore your companion's health and zest for life. 

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