The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

The 31 Most Common Ailments & Treatments
AT A GLANCE

MYGERMANSHEPHERD.ORG

Tim Carter
The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual
- The 31 Most Common Ailments and Treatments
AT A GLANCE

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The Most Helpful Health Info - for both dog and owner!

1) Foundation of Health

Don't add anything that healthy cells don't like!

- Because, when you add something to the body that healthy cells don't like, you make some healthy cells sick.
- When you make some healthy cells sick, the body will soon show its sickness with some symptoms for which you will seek a physician (vet or MD).

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a quality vet but it is more helpful than the average ordinary vet that you pay year after year!

If ever you wish a second opinion see here
You will pay for the consultation and for treatment.

The physician will give you something so you come back.

You come back and you pay again for the next consultation and more treatment.

Both the physician and you will consider it a new ailment.

Neither of you will recognize that it's related: Earlier you added something that healthy cells don't like.

So remember: When you add something that healthy cells don't like, you make some healthy cells sick.

Always!

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2) Purpose of Treatment

The Foundation of Health takes us to a critically important topic that is routinely given minimal consideration by physicians:

What is your purpose of treatment?

The existing classifications I find inadequate, so here is mine:

1. **Treatment to Cure**
   Whenever treatment costs money or quality of life or life, any deviation from treatment to cure must be substantiated in detail! Thus always.

2. **Treatment to Hinder Progression**
   Where treatment to cure has been ruled out conclusively, the subordinate purpose is

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treatment to hinder progression of the disorder or disease or defect.

3. **Treatment of Symptoms**
Where treatment to cure has been ruled out conclusively and treatment to hinder progression has been taken care of, only the final subordinate purpose is treatment to suppress or palliate symptoms if the symptoms are pain or discomfort.

Thus note that treatment of symptoms should come last, and only if the symptoms are pain or discomfort.

- And yet, for *allopathic physicians* treatment of symptoms is everything!

- This is the prime problem of western medicine and *why the physicians don't achieve cure*.

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And it is the very reason for the costly national health system! In every nation.

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3) How to Ensure Health

Merely following these little guidelines can ensure your dog's health (and yours too). Indeed.

1. Recognize the Foundation of Health

The first and most important step to ensure health is to recognize the Foundation of Health:

- Do not feed anything that comprises known cell toxins, either as part of ingredients or from the manufacturing process:
  - dry dog "food" bags (kibble)
  - industrial dog tin "food"
  - industrial dog "treats".

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• Do not provide **chew toys or other toys** that disintegrate and get ingested and intoxicate the body (eg many plastic toys do).

• Do not accept and pay for superfluous **vaccinations**.

• Do not accept and pay for **steroidal or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs**.

• Do not accept and pay for unspecific **antibiotics**.

• Do not give your dog **tick and flea spot-ons** that distribute **nerve toxins** via the **cardiovascular system**, rather via the **integumentary system**.

• Do not accept and pay for superfluous **radiation** (whether X-rays or therapy).

More detail in the chapters.

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If ever you wish a second opinion **see here**
2. Recognize the Necessity to Know the Fundamentals Yourself

You *cannot* rely on your vet: your vet runs a business, you raise a dog.

- We dog owners all *must* know of the most common ailments, their *symptoms*, their *cause*, treatment, and prevention in order to have lifelong the best relationship with our *dog*.

- Because only when you have a basic understanding of all of these areas, you will know how to keep your dog healthy and happy, and so yourself too.

- And what the consequences are if you don't, financial and otherwise!

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- The most common ailments, their symptoms, their cause, treatment, and prevention I portray in this Health Manual.

- As you will notice throughout, many ailments may be indicated by the same symptoms (eg lethargy, listlessness, loss of appetite etc).

- Therefore you will generally need to consider the concurrent appearance of several symptoms, and also put them in relation to lifestyle changes, dietary changes, exercise changes, environmental factors etc.

- In other words, by reading this Health Manual you practice awareness and applying educated common sense.

- To help with that further, I went to great length to cross-link pretty much everything!

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
• Make use of the links, jump back and forth and across freely. Because, since our birth hardly anything in life we learned from one-time reading. Right?

• I too read important papers five, six times! And with each time I understand more and correct some of my earlier understanding. That's life, that makes it interesting.

3. Recognize that this Health Manual is Meant to Prepare You Well

Impartial expert information to prepare you well:

• We dog owners all must also be well prepared to critically question the vet's blanket treatment protocol, and for once to decline paying for treatments that cause nothing but harm.

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a quality vet but it is more helpful than the average ordinary vet that you pay year after year!

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• If you had a very sick child, you would probably study the ailment yourself, and not just blindly accept everything the doc suggests.

• In fact, you might then want to visit a second and third doc, right? The same with a vet for your dog.

• This Health Manual, like anyone else's information, can only give you additional information. Like with your child and yourself, ultimately you and your wallet will determine the course of action.

• However, here all information is impartial. I neither get, nor would accept, payment or perks from the pharma industry, pet "food" industry, or veterinarian associations. This is what makes mygermanshepherd.org so unique.

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a quality vet but it is more helpful than the average ordinary vet that you pay year after year!

If ever you wish a second opinion see here
• If ever you feel unsure about a vet's treatment recommendation or medicament prescription, you are welcome to seek further unbiased help via our consultation page.

• Just in case you ask "Why 31, not 30 ailments?", I say "Why make it an even number where it isn't?"

• Therefore the subtitle The 31 Most Common Ailments and Treatments AT A GLANCE.

• At a glance means succinct, to give you initial insight into an ailment you are concerned about or interested in.

• If you then feel you need to know more and see a veterinarian in person, after reading all of this Health Manual you will be well prepared.

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a quality vet but it is more helpful than the average ordinary vet that you pay year after year!

If ever you wish a second opinion see here
4. Nothing Can Replace the Regular Checkup by a Quality Vet

Consider how much faster dogs live than people, so a yearly checkup should really be the minimum.

- The warning signs of many ailments can easily be misinterpreted, and some ailments do not show warning signs at all.

- Therefore it is important that you take your dog to a **quality vet** for a checkup **regularly**, even when everything seems fine.

- Consider **how many years represent a dog year**, and that you can communicate your ailment and simply drive to a doctor.

- Then you will appreciate that a yearly vet visit is not "a waste of money" if your dog's wellbeing means anything to you. Probably

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a **quality vet** but it is more helpful than the average **ordinary vet** that you pay year after year!

If ever you wish a second opinion see here
You too see a doc more than once in 6 to 10 years, right?

- Avoid discussing with your veterinarian that you have "read up on the ailment on the internet". There is so much nonsense on the web these days that your veterinarian may rightfully respond with criticism, or simply ignore whatever you say. Neither will help your dog.

- Instead, use this Health Manual as a *manual*, jumping back and forth and across freely, and think about it *so much* that you feel confident saying what you say to your veterinarian.

- With every ailment, you decide yourself at what point you visit a veterinarian.

- Probably you neither want to be your vet's best customer to the extent that your vet

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here 28/544
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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
merely focusing on the **symptoms** of the single condition *at this time*.

- **A holistic vet** is one whose passion is to consider the connectivity of all ailments and treatments over the entire lifetime of your dog, because (s)he acknowledges the **Foundation of Health**. Holistic is an attitude, not a study.

- Such veterinarian is likely to cost a *little* more initially (because it is impossible for them to obtain perks from pharma and "pet food" industries!), but such veterinarian **costs much less overall** because you don't have to visit them subsequently to treat all the "**side effects**" that visiting an *allopathic* vet involves!

This manual cannot replace a visual and physical check by a *quality* vet but it is more helpful than the average *ordinary* vet that you pay year after year! 

If ever you wish a second opinion see here
6. What is a Quality Dog Owner

With health, doing less is better than doing more:

- As much as every ordinary *allopathic* vet will argue in favor of machine-use examinations and in favor of *antibiotics* and *steroids* and other *blanket medications*, you should aim to:

  - avoid all that puts unnecessary strain on your dog, and
  
  - avoid all that is likely to have "side effects" that will require further treatments of the same ailment and/or additional ailments!

- Why? See the *Foundation of Health*.

- For all the mentioned reasons, it is essential that *you* yourself know *this Health Manual*

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and understand this Periodical. No worries, it is linked hundreds of times, so relevant it is.

- Revisit both this Health Manual and this Periodical after a week, after a month, after three months, and you will understand ever more, and even be proud of yourself, yes!

These documents won't go away.

(well, unless I can no longer pay the server fees for mygermanshepherd.org as all this is free)

7. Recognize Your Power as Paying Medical Consumer

Demand always creates supply: Have high expectations of your veterinarian (and MD alike), and soon your expectations will be met.

- While only a quality vet can

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• make the **right** examinations
• determine the **cause** of any symptoms
• and decide on the **most suitable** treatment

• finding a **quality vet** is difficult because in the past too many dog owners have rewarded substandard **allopathic vets** with payment.

• Yet it is **easy** to *leave* outright the average **ordinary allopathic vet**!

• Just leave.

• Also be aware that it is you who has the knowledge of all the factors just mentioned:
  • lifestyle changes
  • dietary changes
  • exercise changes

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• environmental factors etc.

• Therefore, if your vet doesn't ask you questions relating to all these areas, and if your vet doesn't appreciate your insight, I would advise: LEAVE!

• Just leave. Indeed.

• That brings you many steps closer to finding a quality vet.

• In fact, the more vets you leave outright - eg with words like "I will not subject my dog to such incompetence!" - the sooner you (and everyone else) will be left with only quality vets.

• If you proceed like above, then it's highly likely that every time you visit a quality vet they conclude: "Your dog is in good health",

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and you pay nothing but the cheap basic assessment laid out subsequently here.

• This also means, you don't pay dearly long-term for the harm to health that the short-term relief of some symptom implies. Don't!

8. A Note on Home Treatment

A bit of care goes a long way:

• Make sure that you never apply any ointment, lotion, powder, spray, etc close to the eyes, never in the ears, and never in the mouth or nose, unless it is specifically and clearly meant for this body opening.

• If this ever happens nonetheless, rinse well under running water, and if it looks serious or your dog acts oddly visit a vet straight away.

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Never administer your dog two medicaments at the same time, *unless* prescribed as such by the vet.

"At the same time" does not just mean "the same minute" but can actually mean "within the same 30 or 60 day period".

This is because various lab medicaments have a powerful impact on body functions, and so they may trigger drug interactions that can seriously harm your dog long-term.

You can however generally administer a medicament and a *natural* food supplement at the same time without having to fear severe complications.

Mark the word *natural*, as many food supplements are not entirely natural but

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mixed with chemical substances otherwise found in lab medicaments.

9. What to Require from Your Veterinarian

Require a lot of quality and very little treatment:

- A veterinarian should only ever give you a *suggestion* how to treat your dog for an ailment after having identified the exact *cause* of the ailment!

- Anything other, and you are *not* facing a *quality vet*. LEAVE.

- Do *not* accept and pay for treatment before the *cause* has been diagnosed.

- That is like paying a plumber for merely taking a *look* at your water leak. That's not

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going to fix the leak, and so you would never pay him for that.

- Note that when your veterinarian says something like "it's conjunctivitis", or "it's an ear infection", or "it's an intestinal inflammation" or the like, then that's NOT the cause but the symptom.

- **Treating the symptom** is palliation or suppression and is not going to help, it will force you to come back to the vet soon, with the same and with more health problems!

- So, don't fall for treating symptoms. LEAVE.

- From interest, studies, and experience spanning many decades, and having interviewed countless top experts, and total independence from pharma industry and pet

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"food" industry and veterinarian associations, I can assure you:

- for every ailment there exist natural remedies
- that have zero "side effects" mid and long term
- and yet are more effective
- and are therefore the more appropriate treatment too.

- The whole point of finding the right veterinarian is to get help to identify the CAUSE of your dog's ailment, and then to find the natural remedy that actually helps your dog: finding cure.

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Rather than to be lured into lab medicaments that merely *palliate or suppress* some *symptoms* which helps your veterinarian!

And with every new round of treatment, again and again.

10. What Will a Quality Vet Do in a Consultation

A quality vet will do little and enquire a lot. So that you don't pay the vet *dearly* merely for the exchange of "Hello, and by the way your dog looks fine" - or worse and *way more common*, that you pay dearly *long-term* for the harm to *health* that the short-term relief of some *symptom* implies - what is a *quality vet* supposed to do in a consultation?

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Here are the only things we expect from a vet during the - at the very least - yearly vet visit.

You may or may not want to expect the same.

1. A good look in the mouth and eyes and ears - a quality vet can see MANY health concerns simply by looking in the mouth!

2. Auscultation with a stethoscope: Cardiovascular system, Respiratory system, and Digestive system.

3. Every three years a titer.

IF either 1. or 2. raise concern, an ECG (electrocardiogram), ultrasound, urinalysis,

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stool analysis, or complete blood analysis may be indicated.

- Note that that's it!

- No vaccination "booster", no X-ray, no steroidal drugs, no nonsteroidal drugs, no antibiotics, and no kibble bags, dog "treat" samples, or chew bones from the vet's shelves!

- A complete blood analysis can be truly life-saving (as I had to learn with my new puppy!), and in all other instances it gives deep insight into the health of all 12 body systems of the dog.

- When you cannot observe that your chosen vet performs 1. and 2. - or way more common - when the vet does perform or prescribe or sell what is explicitly excluded

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then it would be wise to raise your concern immediately, certainly before you pay.

- If your vet then reacts stubborn or uppity, the best response would be to *leave* outright. Just leave.

- Like I said, you may or may not want to expect the same. It's your choice, your life, your dog, and your bank account.

- In most nations every **three years** (soon every **seven years**) a Rabies "booster" vaccination is **legally required** - ironically irrespective whether you have a Chihuahua who never leaves the house or a German Shepherd who roams the woods.

- **Other vaccinations are voluntary** and should **NOT** be repeated with a "booster" because

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actually vaccinations last for the life of the dog!

- Exception: When the dog's immune system has been compromised, either directly through administration of steroidal or nonsteroidal immunosuppressants or indirectly through administration of antibiotics, or through severe sickness.

- When the immune system may have been compromised, a titer should be ordered to establish whether immunity still exists.

- Only where the titer suggests that immunity is lost, we would re-vaccinate the dog when healthy for the life-threatening viruses (Parvo and Distemper) that are prevalent in our geography. For no other.

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• *Would* because it has never happened, re-vaccination was never needed because immunity was never lost! The **titre** always showed some reaction, and for us that's enough.

• Again, you may or may not want to expect the same. Studying [this Periodical](#) will help you decide.

• Either way, your chosen vet should know very well:
  • which vaccination is *legally required* in your geography
  • and which vaccinations are *sensible* in your geography and given your dog's living situation, and *why*?

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If your vet cannot explain in plain English why (s)he wants you to pay for a certain vaccination, I would advise: LEAVE.

And if your vet can explain her recommendation in plain English, then consider the vet's suggestion carefully, but do not blindly follow it.

Because remember: the Foundation of Health.

Be a conscious medical consumer. For the benefit of your family, your dog, and your bank account.
4) Veterinarian Reality

Merely recognizing these little guidelines will save your dog's health, your nerves, and your bank account!

1. Vets Run a Business, You Raise a Dog

Forget the movies and dog channel docus when you see a vet: Veterinarian reality is so very different!

- Just like with people doctors (MDs), practicing licence and experience does **not** mean that your veterinarian will
  - enquire of and identify all relevant **symptoms**

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• *relate them* to your dog's lifestyle history and medical history and all past treatments!

• *perform the right examinations*

• correctly identify the *cause* of any ailment

• and *then* prescribe the *most appropriate* treatment

• or *oppose treatment* and *suggest rest* instead!

• Because, *veterinarians run a business* - you see that outright when you look at their dog "food" sales shelves...

• A *physician* and *selling stuff!* The world has gone awry, thanks to the immense lobbying power of the pet "food" industry.

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And because vets run a business is why from an ordinary vet you never hear the final option above: "oppose treatment and suggest rest instead!" - which brings no CASH.

Also note that every veterinarian is inundated with samples, trial agreements, and turnover incentives from pharma industry, pet "food" industry, and research institutes - which often are funded by the prior two!

The above alone fully explains on its own:

- why X-rays etc are done so frequently - the equipment need to be paid for!
- why antibiotics and anti-inflammatories are administered so frequently - it's way easier and quicker than identifying the

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cause and the most appropriate treatment of an ailment!

- and why medicaments in general are prescribed so frequently - they pay perks, while alternative natural treatments pay nothing.

- In addition, the required CPD (Continous Professional Development) is little more than ticking boxes what articles have been read.

- There just isn't enough time in a physician's daily practice to learn of all medical developments, not even to study in detail the ones relevant to the physician's work!

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2. Allopathic Medicine

Learn here *what drives* allopathic medicine - because that is the veterinarian reality you are paying for!

- There is one dominant reason *why* more than 99% of prospective physicians learn nothing but allopathic medicine: CASH.

- The BIG PHARMA of allopathic medicine is where the money is.

- And so a) that's what's being *taught* to budding physicians in the western hemisphere, and b) that's what budding physicians *want* to practice.

- No one could blame them.

- In allopathic medicine *symptoms* are everything to go by. So much so, that the
average allopathic physician is unable to differentiate symptom, trigger, and cause, also defect, disease, and disorder, etc.

- You will notice this when you see your MD, when you see your vet, and every day when you read or watch the news.

- Indeed, even in medical research papers and medical journals all these terms and more are thrown around and used at random, see eg Nature, The Lancet, New England Journal of Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Harvard Health, etc.

- No one would confuse a mouse with a rat, suicide with murder, water with fire, and so on. - But in medicine, they are willfully unspecific, both in diagnosis and in treatment.

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• With such lack of precision no car engine could be repaired, no aircraft could be repaired, no i-phone, no nothing!

• And yet, we expect with such lack of precision we can repair the way more complex human body and the canine body??

• No wonder MD visits and vet visits become ever more frequent after the first treatment attempt.

Now read again the first rule of Allopathic Medicine above, starting with "There is one dominant reason why...".

3. Key Flaws of Allopathic Medicine

Learn here what stalls allopathic medicine - because that is what keeps you paying!

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The focus on symptoms in allopathic medicine stems from the naive idea that "when the symptom is removed, so is the ailment".

Because, for allopathic physicians symptom equals sickness.

And yet, any good observer of the human or canine organism will notice "when the symptom is removed ... the body shows its sickness with another symptom elsewhere".

Because, you cannot fool the human organism, nor the canine organism, by removing some symptom.

You can only fool medical consumers into believing just that - and opening their wallet for every new round of removing another symptom!

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• So *how* do allopathic physicians remove your or your dog's *symptoms*?

• They developed lab medicaments ("drugs") that *conceal* a specific symptom, *mask* it, *cloak* it, *alleviate* it, *disguise* it, *palliate* it. So that's called *palliation*.

• Once you stop using the drug, the *original* symptom returns.

• They also developed even more powerful drugs, drugs that can *stifle* the symptom, *quash* it, *quell* it, *overcome* it, *subdue* it, *suppress* it. So that's called *suppression*.

• Once you stop using the drug, the *original* symptom does not return. Possibly never.

• *By far* these are the two biggest groups of drugs in allopathic medicine (both by count

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and by number of prescriptions). More than 99% of all drugs.

- Because ironically, in drug development precision is imposing: Allopathic medicine developed drugs *so precise* they can for example inhibit the organism's production of a specific protein.

- Allopathic medicine excels in identifying the drug that successfully *palliates* or *suppresses* your symptom, or your dog's symptom. Because then you reward them with: CASH.

- They tell you, and you believe, *"when the symptom is gone, so is the sickness"*.

- And that's *why* with *this medical belief system* there seems to be *no need* to differentiate between *defect, disease, and*

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disorder, nor between symptom, trigger, and cause. They say: "You are cured!"

- Well no, you aren't cured, your dog isn't cured: The cause of the defect, disease, or disorder is still there, the body is still sick.

- And so, not before long the body will signal its sickness by resurfacing the symptom (if it got palliated) or showing a new, another symptom, elsewhere (if it got suppressed).

- Your allopathic vet or MD will treat that new symptom as unrelated, as new ailment, with a new drug. And the resurfaced symptom with another round of treatment, or sustained treatment, or a more powerful drug.

- Either way, again they make you happy: they successfully remove your symptom or your dog's symptom.

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• And you make them happy: CASH.

4. Steroids and NSAIDs

Consider the biggest examples in terms of drug use in allopathic medicine to further your understanding of the Key Flaws of Allopathic Medicine. First, steroids and NSAIDs:

• **steroidal drugs** (corticosteroids) are:
  - glucocorticoids (cortisone, hydrocortisone, prednisone, prednisolone, triamcinolone, methylprednisolone, betamethasone, dexamethasone, etc) and
  - mineralocorticoids (corticosterone, aldosterone, fludrocortisone, desoxycorticosterone, etc)

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• **non-steroidal drugs (NSAIDs)** are for example:
  
  • meloxicam (Metacam)
  • carprofen (Rimadyl/Novox)
  • deracoxib (Deramaxx/Novartis), etc.

You will read in most places and hear from most vets and MDs things like "anti-inflammatories have its uses if done right" (largest groups of drugs here: steroids and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, NSAIDs).

But that's **not** right, for the reasons becoming clear throughout this Health Manual where relevant. Here a short summary.

  • As their name suggests, anti-inflammatories work *against* an inflammation: they **palliate** or **suppress** the inflammation.
But an inflammation is the response of the defense system to an infection (disease) or to a physiological dysfunction (disorder) or rarely, to some other bodily impairment (defect).

The purpose of an inflammation is to allow the organism to initiate the healing process.

The inflammation signals all 12 body systems:

- that the organism has been harmed - by an intruder (disease), or by an imbalance of a bodily substance (disorder), or by a structural or functional impairment (defect)
- to get ready for further harm
- to go easy on the organism while being harmed and while under repair

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• to assemble available resources at the site of inflammation

• and to help eliminate the intruder, imbalance, or structural or functional impairment.

• And yet, allopathic physicians argue: "But that response often is disproportionate, undue, hyperbolic, or even entirely unjustified, and so we have to curtail it, reduce it, halt it, or entirely prevent it".

• But you have to wonder: "says who??"

• Today, physicians know plenty more times of what they knew just 30 years ago, and back then as well as today they admit they do not understand the intricacy of the human organism, nor of the canine organism.

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But then with the same breath they proclaim: "But that response often is disproportionate, undue, hyperbolic, or even entirely unjustified, and so we have to curtail it, reduce it, halt it, or entirely prevent it".

Not sure what you think, but I find such deviousness and presumptuousness striking!

So let's think: Can an inflammation be "disproportionate, undue, hyperbolic, or even entirely unjustified"??

No, obviously not, over millions of years evolution has refined ever more elaborate organisms, including what is today a dog, and a human being.

Neither would be living today(!) had the organism not developed to alarm and mobilize all 12 body systems with a subtlety
even **allopathic physicians** admit today they do not understand.

- So when your MD or vet says "*we have to curtail the inflammation, reduce it, halt it, or entirely prevent it*" then because it brings CASH, not because it is sensible.

- What the MD and vet would do instead if they were interested in **cure**, they would put all effort into researching the **cause** of the inflammation, and then address that **cause**!

- And researching **why** is the inflammation so strong that *they think* it's "*disproportionate, undue, hyperbolic*"?

- Or, **why** is the inflammation **chronic**?

- Because remember, when **allopathic physicians** curtail the inflammation and thus remove the **symptom** that gives you or your
dog discomfort or pain, they haven't *cured* a thing.

- Instead, they just made it difficult to impossible to identify the *cause*, so that the ailment *can* be cured at all.

- Worse, the administration of steroids and NSAIDs often *cause* *chronic* conditions: for example, *Bloat*, *Digestive Disorder* and stomach ulcers, *Bladder Infection*, *immune system disorders* like *Allergies*, lymphoma *(Cancer)*, etc!

- Both steroidal and nonsteroidal drugs also deter the *vital fluid retention of the organism*(!) and have *renal toxicity*, they cause kidney and liver *disorder* up to and including *Kidney failure/ Chronic Renal Failure* *(CRF)*.

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• But not a problem: Each and every *new symptom* the *allopathic medicine* will treat as *unrelated*, as new ailment, with a new drug. For example the harm done to the vital fluid retention they will treat with *mineralocorticoids* like *corticosterone* (see above), ie with *more* corticosteroids!

• And each and every time you reward them with: MORE CASH.

• Happy New World, welcome to *allopathic medicine*!

• Steroids and NSAIDs not only have *anti-inflammatory properties* but also have *immunosuppressive properties*: they suppress the production of lymph, macrophages, and other cells *necessary* for immunological defense.

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Indeed amongst other details, what differentiates the many steroids and NSAIDs is the degree of anti-inflammatory efficacy versus immunosuppressive efficacy.

For dogs that are already sick or in the past have been treated with steroids, NSAIDs, or antibiotics, the immunosuppressive properties are worst: they multiply disease risk and disorder risk.

As their name suggests, immunosuppressive drugs suppress the immune system: they shut down or significantly impair the immune system's ability to fight off infections and own cells that have gone awry - up until at least three or four months after the end of treatment!

In addition to the vastly increased disease likelihood and disorder likelihood, the

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administration of steroids or NSAIDs also causes a disruption of the collaboration of all 12 body systems.

- In particular, steroids and NSAIDs always cause Endocrine system disorders and Immune system disorders, often Integumentary system disorders, and sometimes Nervous system disorders.

- Thus even if your dog were not to contract an infection up until at least three or four months after the end of steroid or NSAID treatment, any subsequent Allergies and other disorders including lymphoma (Cancer) - and the associated cost! - must be considered a direct result of administering these drugs.

- Because remember: the Foundation of Health. Indeed.

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5. Antibiotics

Consider the biggest examples in terms of drug use in allopathic medicine to further your understanding of the Key Flaws of Allopathic Medicine. Here, antibiotics:

- You will read in most places things like "Antibiotics can cure infections, antibiotic prophylaxis can even prevent infections", and this is about a quarter right but then conceals 75% of the truth.

- It is like saying "crude oil can power cars, a full tank of crude oil can even take you from New York to Los Angeles".

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• Well no, you need a *special* car engine to power it with crude oil, and unless you drive a fuel truck you will never reach Los Angeles.

• First note that an *infection* can take many forms. Is it an infection from a bacterium, a fungus, a virus, a protozoa, or a parasite?

• *If at all*, antibiotics only help with an infection from a *bacterium*!

• Next, *which* bacterium do you need help with?

• Ordinary *allopathic physicians* neither know nor aim to find out. Or when was the last time *your* MD or vet scraped skin to grow a culture in vitro in the lab back office for cytologic analysis??

• Instead, they prescribe "*broad-spectrum*" antibiotics. But note that "*broad-spectrum*"

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antibiotics do not exist: *Against more than half of the major group of bacterial infections NO antibiotic is effective!*

- Ordinary allopathic physicians don't know this or don't care. And when you inform them, they will argue with you *out of habit* that they "know it all".

- Worse, when you take a "broad-spectrum" antibiotic, a broad spectrum of bacteria immediately start to develop resistance against that "broad spectrum" antibiotic!

- So now you have the situation that the prescribed antibiotic does *not* help, and yet makes the bacterial threat even greater!

- Further, note that yeast and pathogenic bacteria *naturally coexist* with all the beneficial bacteria in the digestive system.

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• There is a constant battle among all of these microbes to become the biggest or only force in the gastrointestinal tract (as well as in the mouth, rectum, vagina, and skin, though in healthy organisms here in rather minimal numbers).

• Mark that antibiotics only and indiscriminately target bacteria, and they are most successful with the beneficial bacteria that have developed no weaponry because their sole function is to enable the body to survive and thrive.

• This is why antibiotics lead to an overgrowth of yeast and pathogenic bacteria in the digestive system.

• Because, what happens is:

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antibiotics always kill the beneficial, often vital bacteria

while antibiotics are meant to kill only pathogenic bacteria

and antibiotics never kill yeast or any other fungi, nor viruses, protozoa, prions, or parasites.

So, now you have the situation that the population of yeast and the population of the heavily armed pathogenic bacteria are able to grow ever larger in the digestive system, and they need more room, and so they start to perforate the stomach lining and gut lining to expand.

This not only results in the so-called leaky gut syndrome (there it is!) but also allows the yeast and pathogenic bacteria to piggyback

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with the bloodstream via the **cardiovascular system** to spread into other tissues throughout the body!

- Then you or your dog gets *sick*, and what typically happens is, you take your dog to an ordinary **allopathic vet** who *blanket-prescribes* even more antibiotics. How smart is that?

- Now remember: the **Foundation of Health**.

- Also, you will read in most places things like "*Don't worry, antibiotics do not impact on the immune system.*"

- This should make you extremely worried. Because it shows you are facing a **subpar allopathic** physician who doesn't understand

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the most basic interactions between all body systems, here:

- Look just above why antibiotics lead to an overgrowth of yeast and pathogenic bacteria.

- That very overgrowth of yeast and pathogenic bacteria of course drastically impairs the work of the immune system (as well as the work of the cardiovascular system, the digestive system, the integumentary system, etc).

- The failure to understand all the indirect impact of medicaments on the elaborate interactions between all body systems is characteristic for allopathic physicians, and it's because they focus on symptoms, instead of on the cause of sickness.

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• And maybe because, the bigger the indirect impact of a medicament, the more medicaments can be prescribed thereafter. Which gives more: CASH.

6. Restrictive conditions for antibiotics

The use of antibiotics is only sensible when:

1. you are facing a life-threatening condition or one that materially impairs the quality of life long-term

2. and the particular bacterium has been identified

3. and an antibiotic that is known to be still effective has been identified

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4. and an effective natural remedy is unknown. As you will realize, it is very, very rare that these four stringent conditions for a sensible use of antibiotics are met!

Finally, please note that in the past the advice of mainstream medicine has always been to administer the complete prescribed course of treatment (usually 10 or 14 days), because it was thought that incomplete antibiotic treatment leads to bacterial resistance. I too copied that advice. However, now seems clear that it was not supported by evidence, and that's great news because common sense has always been that "patients are put at unnecessary risk from antibiotic resistance when treatment is given for longer than necessary, not when it is stopped early". Right?

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So now you are advised to **stop** antibiotic treatment once there are no more **symptoms** of **bacterial infection**. Though, it may take some years before **your** veterinarian and MD communicate to you **this new antibiotic advice** of mainstream medicine: It is clear that **the old advice increases their income** while the new advice does not.

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Again, be aware of **Veterinarian Reality** such that you can **ensure your dog's health**.

And always remember the **Purpose of Treatment**, and the **Foundation of Health**.

Now, on to the 31 most common ailments.

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Dehydration

Dehydration is a disorder describing the condition that there is less fluid in the body than is required for health and wellbeing.

Dehydration is a medical condition, not just thirst. It is a serious ailment because it spontaneously leads to many related ailments, all of which put enormous strain on the health and wellbeing of your dog *long-term*, and some of which are even fatal.

Along with a loss of fluid throughout the body, Dehydration also involves a loss of crucial electrolytes - minerals such as sodium, chloride, potassium, etc.

Indeed the body's water balance is of such fundamental importance for health that I gave
this topic its own Periodical. You may jump ahead and read it now: The role of water intake for German Shepherds.

Who suffers from Dehydration?

Dehydration may well be the most common ailment for German Shepherds because this breed is so agile and has such a strong metabolism that it is simply not enough to serve a bowl of fresh water with each dog meal (and three bowls with each dry "food" meal).

Also, the hotter it is and/or the more exercise your dog does and/or the more stressed the dog is feeling(!), the more fluids you must supply through the right foods and a bowl of fresh water.

Finally, fever and illness and injury also contribute to the condition of Dehydration, because the healing process consumes extra fluids, and

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because you may be under the (wrong) impression that your dog is too weak to drink in that condition and so without intent you might be providing less fluids.

**Warning Signs**

Typical warning signs of Dehydration are:

- Dry, sticky gums
- Delay in capillary refill time
- Lack of skin elasticity
- Persistent panting
- Sunken eyes
- Too much or too little urination
- Lethargy

Capillary refill time is the time it takes the gums to return to their normal color after you carefully

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pressed your finger on them. Capillary refill time should not exceed a second.

**Preventing Dehydration**

To prevent Dehydration, **only feed REAL foods, natural foods**. Because **only natural foods have the high water content that is so fundamental for health**. In addition, always provide a large bowl of fresh water, **day and night**. Two bowls of fresh water at different places throughout the house if your house is rather large.

Don't think "If I restrict the amount of water intake of my dog, I don't need to walk my dog that often". With that logic, you could also argue "If I don't have a dog, I don't need to walk at all", right?

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If your dog cannot relieve every three to four hours maximum when awake and after six to eight hours when the metabolism is slowed down during sleep (but a young puppy every hour, don't believe it? Proof here) then you are asking for dog behavior problems - even before dog health problems manifest.

In particular Bladder Infection, Bloat, Digestive Disorder, Kidney Failure, etc. All the way through to otherwise rare conditions such as liver disorder, blindness, etc.

If you are not willing or cannot take your dog out that often (at least for a brisk relieve walk), you better provide a potty place on your premises or a dog potty of suitable size for a German Shepherd.

And if your dog is not willing to drink much? Then the act of filling a bowl with fresh water can often tempt a "drink-resistant" dog to drink more: I recently was able to test this as well because,

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except after exercise, my Miguel normally doesn't approach his water bowl during the day (during the night he always does though). And I noticed that even this "drink-resistant" dog does come to drink from his bowl when I go and add some fresh water or replace the whole lot!

Try it.

Whenever you take your dog on a hike, a run, or prolonged outdoor exercise, consider getting one of those useful dog backpacks and put a large bottle of water on each side (for balancing).

This type of dog backpack has four benefits:

- Your dog will carry its own water supply, not you.
- You can be sure your dog will get fresh water, not contaminated water.
- You can put lots of stuff in them, in addition to the water for your dog.

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Crucially, the equal weight distribution on the sides and the harness-style straps hold this dog backpack in place, while most models annoy and hurt the dog as they move around the dog's body.

**Treating Dehydration**

When prevention came too late, and the warning signs suggest that treatment is indicated.

To treat Dehydration you do not necessarily need to take your dog to the vet, as cheap text copies on internet marketing sites suggest. If that were the case, the majority of the agile dogs with a strong metabolism would be at the vet every week.

So, better use your common sense: The first warning signs of Dehydration are dry, sticky gums and a delay in capillary refill time.

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Therefore, when you make either observation treat your dog for these first signs of Dehydration. Obviously this requires *awareness*, if not presence near your dog, certainly if the dog is confined to a place that can get rather warm.

Make your dog drink an entire bowl of fresh water (better even, squashed cucumber water) to which you've added the recommended dosage of *electrolytes* to replace the crucial minerals lost during Dehydration.

If your dog does not empty the entire bowl of fresh water although you are mildly encouraging the dog for 10 minutes or so, then your dog may have another underlying ailment that causes the Dehydration, and you may want to take your dog to the vet.

Likewise, if you notice persistent panting *even an hour after exercise*, or sunken eyes, then the

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problem is severe and you may want to take your dog to the vet immediately.

My puppy Miguel had this persistent panting too (and still pants forever), and in his case the blood test revealed he had severe anemia triggered by tick-transmitted hemotropic mycoplasmosis.

So again, do take your dog to the vet immediately if you notice either of these symptoms, because then something is wrong!

Conversely, too much or too little urination or lethargy are hard to judge because they depend on so many other factors. Therefore, these warning signs must be considered in combination with other warning signs.

If the condition persists or is recurring somewhat regularly, again there is an underlying cause for the Dehydration, and you may want to take your dog to a quality vet for a full medical checkup.

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Don't wait for the next routine examination (which could be a year away), take your dog to a quality vet straight away.

Yes, the vet visit costs money, but having a sick dog or a dog with behavior problems may in future cost so much more.

In that regard, for a rather large, strong, and agile outdoor dog like the German Shepherd it's worth considering dog health insurance and liability dog insurance, regardless of any legal requirements. Legal requirements are irrelevant as long as nothing happens, but common sense always applies.

**Giving milk when dehydrated?**

I know of too many vets to count, that advise to give milk upon Dehydration.

No. Do not serve milk, ever! Such advice has no substance and is wrong: Other reasons aside,
dogs do not produce the enzyme lactase which is required to break down lactose, the 2% to 8% sugar that is in milk.

By the way, about 90% of the world population of people too lack lactase and would better not consume milk to stay much healthier! Just a hint.

Since I learned it (and reflected on my many symptoms), I too completely stopped having milk with anything. I can't always resist ice cream though!

Conversely, fermented dairies (yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, other cheese, sour cream, or indeed fermented ice cream!) are not problematic (in this regard). Because, to achieve fermentation bacteria or yeast are added which turn the lactose into lactic acid.

Lactic acid is naturally produced all the time by muscle tissue and red blood cells during normal

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muscle activity, so no problem for either dogs or people. Well, unless you or your dog is known to suffer *Lactic acidosis*, which would mean there's a blood disorder too! Just so you know.

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Hip Dysplasia

Hip Dysplasia (Hip Deformity, HD) is a progressive *inherited defect* describing the condition that there is a *mutation existing in the genetic code* that over time leads to an abnormal formation of the hip in *every dog that has this mutation*. The abnormal formation of the hip causes looseness in the joints and cartilage damage, which then further leads to a *disorder*, Arthritis. It can make movements for your dog much tougher and painful too.

Of all the hereditary defects of German Shepherds, the most common probably still is Hip Dysplasia. However, on a global basis, meanwhile less than 1 in 5 dogs is affected.

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Hip Dysplasia is painful for your dog, and it's frustrating for yourself too. It can become apparent in adult dogs of any age, even as young as two years.

This progressive defect is orthopaedic in nature and the end stage is even painful to see. Having a dog suffering Hip Dysplasia is not pleasant at all!

Who Suffers Hip Dysplasia

As Hip Dysplasia is inherited it primarily runs in certain breeds, including the German Shepherd Dog.

This recessive genetic defect passes down through a specific lineage of dogs. If you have two loose hip dogs mate with each other, the result is a Hip Dysplasia stricken puppy.

Of course, not all dogs with this genetic defect immediately suffer from it and show symptoms.

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So even if a puppy's parents have been *X-rayed* and determined healthy, it can be hard to determine if your new puppy has Hip Dysplasia. Although an X-ray can determine the degree of Hip Dysplasia, it is not wise to subject a puppy to an X-ray, and worse, just for this purpose: To determine Hip Dysplasia the X-ray requires general anesthesia because the test is extremely painful. Therefore, if at all then this X-ray should be done while the puppy is anesthetized for neutering or spaying.

*We did exactly this with my new puppy Miguel,* and we only did it because the hospital head vet suspected Hip Dysplasia, and *in such case surgery is only successful if done before age 7 months.*

There are various lifestyle, environmental, and dietary *triggers* for Hip Dysplasia, foremost excessive proteins, vitamins and minerals in

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"fortified food", as is common with industrial dog "food".

Items and substances that are designed to make puppies grow faster or larger also have been shown to trigger Hip Dysplasia.

Further, jumping - during play and excitement, or worse, at the wish of an owner who doesn't know of the danger of jumping for this breed.

Finally, insufficient support of the skeletal development - again triggered by the hypocritically "complete" but in fact toxic industrial dog "food", and then annihilation of the bodily repair mechanism through administration of steroids, as is so often done.

With age, Obesity and Arthritis often become further triggers.

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Warning Signs

The early indicators of Hip Dysplasia are:

- the puppy or adult dog sits with an indicative angle of the back legs (which quality vets can identify, and indeed our hospital head vet demonstrated with my new puppy)
- later, difficulty in standing or moving
- drop in energy levels
- lameness in the dog's back legs
- not wanting to use stairs, especially when going up
- rarely wanting to stand up on the back legs, nor jumping up on anything
- hopping with the back legs when walking
- signs of soreness when lying down, especially after exercise.

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Preventing Hip Dysplasia

Foremost, act responsibly, never pay a breeder for a dog with Hip Dysplasia, whether professional breeder or backyard breeder! By paying them, effectively you reward the breeder for not taking interest in eliminating Hip Dysplasia altogether!

With a rescue dog it's different, and only with a rescue dog, because the adoption fee that you pay to a rescue center is not rewarding the breeder of the dog, but sharing the cost of running the rescue center, such that the innocent dogs can find a real home.

Thus if you really want to get a dog from a breeder, have the dog HD certified before you even consider to pay! At the very least, agree in a written contract that the breeder will have to pay you 10 times the amount if the dog is later found to have HD.

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Now most breeders will walk away, and that's great! It sorts out the junk among dog breeders: the breeders who aren't sure that their dogs are HD-free, because the breeders didn't bother to check both parents before their breeding venture! Thus again, act responsibly and the dog world will improve.

**Treating Hip Dysplasia**

If you notice any of the early warning signs listed above, regardless of age, make it easy for the dog from now on: In particular no jumping at all for a dog with suspected HD.

Frequent light exercise, eg plain terrain hikes and swimming. Exercise to strengthen the muscles and tendons, without overstrain.

Give your dog only REAL food, natural foods. No industrial dog "food", which actually are toxic.

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waste products from rendering plants. Because food naturally has such dramatic impact on health that you can easily delay and reduce the impact of hereditary defects like Hip Dysplasia!

Next, make sure your dog is always well hydrated. This too delays and reduces the impact of HD. Hence why "dry food" really is the worst, even if you were to make homemade dry food. Conversely, natural foods have a naturally high water content.

Other than the above, the attempts to treat Hip Dysplasia vary depending on the severity of the ailment. The more conservative non-invasive treatments include:

- weight loss
- top joint supplements like Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM or Yumove
- pain medication

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The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

- **back and hip support brace**
- **physical therapy**
- **basic exercise routines to work the hips.**

Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM is a clinically researched, freely available joint health supplement with a well over a decade long track record. Vets frequently prescribe it to improve the dog's mobility in cases of Hip Dysplasia, **Elbow Dysplasia**, and **Arthritis**. It may also help with **Panosteitis**, **Hind Leg Weakness**, and **Lumbosacral Stenosis**.

**Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM** has *only positive reviews* from virtually every dog owner who tried it - which alone makes it an impressive remedy. Miguel was on it too, until Amazon stopped shipping it to Portugal where we were at the time.

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Since then Miguel has been on Yumove, and still is until this runs out. Originally I had planned to stop it once he would stop growing, but now with his hip injury (from a jump!) I am glad he's still getting his daily two Yumove.

Now he visibly has no pain and walks normal again (often, not always!), but I do see from how he sits that he still avoids putting weight on his left hip. Obviously no jumping at all now! Despite that he still begs me to play his favorite game with him (Tail teaser), I won't!

Other HD treatments aim to salvage the degenerating hips before they get too worn out by the defect. For example the Bottoms-up Leash, the Walkabout Rear Harness, or the Walkin Lift Harness.

If the defect has grown to become severe, many ordinary vets will recommend surgery although HD surgery of an adult dog cannot be successful

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as it would have been before age 7 months (see before). And surgery at a late stage of Hip Dysplasia will at best relieve some pain through a better alignment of the joint, but it cannot undo all the damage that has been done by the defect over the years.

The best way to approach HD treatment is to visit a canine chiropractor or other mobility-specialist to assess the degree of impairment through HD, and then to identify the right supportive measures.

In the final stages of Hip Dysplasia (other than putting the dog to sleep) there may be no other option than to provide the dog with the best dog wheelchair. If the front legs and elbows are still strong, the fully adjustable and therefore resalable standard Walkin' Wheels will allow the dog to run around with the hind legs in the

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wheelchair, like thousands of dogs around the world are comfortably doing.

However, if the dog's front legs are weak too, then the only chance (other than putting the dog to sleep) is to make the investment in a customized quad cart that can support all four legs. You will need to consider this carefully though! Not only because of the cost, but because having to use a quad cart puts a lot of stress on the dog.

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Elbow Dysplasia

Elbow Dysplasia (Elbow Deformity, ED) too is a progressive *inherited defect* describing the condition that there is a *mutation existing in the genetic code* that over time leads to an abnormal formation of the elbow in every dog that has this mutation.

Elbow Dysplasia is less common than *Hip Dysplasia*, but it is just as painful when it strikes your dog.

Elbow Dysplasia appears to be independent of Hip Dysplasia. Elbow Dysplasia generally strikes later than Hip Dysplasia.

Again, Elbow Dysplasia too then further leads to a *disorder, Arthritis*, but early diagnosis and adequate treatment of Elbow Dysplasia may prevent the Arthritis.
Who Suffers Elbow Dysplasia

Please see the information on Hip Dysplasia as it applies to Elbow Dysplasia as well.

However here, an additional lifestyle trigger is extreme workout of a dog that has Elbow Dysplasia in the genes: working dogs, sport competition dogs, or simply a demanding dog owner.

You should still provide your dog with gentle daily exercise though: 2 to 4 hours spread over the entire day are a good measure for an adult GSD. This is meant in addition to dog walks to relieve.

Warning Signs

The early indicators of Elbow Dysplasia are:

- drop in energy levels

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• severe difficulty in walking
• lameness in the dog's front legs
• no ability to use stairs
• no ability to jump over barriers
• the elbows may look sore, and if you touch them the dog may whine.

Preventing Elbow Dysplasia

Please see the information on Preventing Hip Dysplasia as it applies to Elbow Dysplasia as well.

Treating Elbow Dysplasia

Again, here applies what you read under Treating Hip Dysplasia. In particular see the notes about REAL food only, hydration, and the top joint

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supplements Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM or Yumove.

A dog with Elbow Dysplasia may need canine pain medication much sooner than a dog with Hip Dysplasia. Only because, strong dogs like GSDs can rather easily drag their hind legs for a while when Hip Dysplasia strikes, but walking forwards doesn't allow to drag the front legs when Elbow Dysplasia strikes. Thus ultimately every walk is painful!

The Walkabout Front Harness may help to salvage the degenerating elbows before they get too worn out by this defect. Indeed, the difference in treatment options becomes more evident in the final stages of Elbow Dysplasia.

While a dog with a hind leg condition, eg due to Hip Dysplasia or an injury, may find help with the Walkin' Wheels that allow the dog to run around fairly happily with the wheelchair attached, a dog

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with a front leg condition, eg due to Elbow Dysplasia or an injury, could only be supplied with a front limb dog cart and that's likely too stressful for the dog to use: The front limb dog cart puts a similar level of stress on the dog as the quad cart.

Hence why with Elbow Dysplasia in the final stage you will need to think carefully whether an extended life under such conditions warrants sufficient quality of life, both for you and for the dog.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Bloat or Gastric Torsion

Both Bloat and Gastric Torsion are a disorder, and they are not the same.

Bloat describes the condition of a distension of the stomach with a lot of gas buildup. Bloat is not the healthy occasional passing gas as in farting. The distension of the stomach is triggered by a paralysis of the stomach lining, such that the gas which is produced in the stomach upon processing meals cannot escape.

The paralysis of the stomach lining is caused by a poor diet - dry "food" (kibble) or high carb fatty meals - and by the administration of antibiotics and other medicaments that indiscriminately destroy gut bacteria which would normally allow the stomach lining to release excess gas.

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This distension of the stomach with gas (ie Bloat) may or may not be followed by Gastric Torsion.

Gastric Torsion describes the condition of a twisting of the stomach such that entry and exit of the stomach get blocked while food is being processed inside and builds up more gas.

Thus Gastric Torsion is the end result of Bloat in dogs where twisting of the stomach occurs. For anatomical reasons this is predominantly the case with deep-chested dogs, like for example German Shepherds.

The twisting happens quite easily when a full, heavy stomach is being moved abruptly during exercise like jumping. As the blockage of entry and exit of the stomach makes it impossible for digestive gases to ever escape, Gastric Torsion is almost always fatal!

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In fact, the only chance of survival is that within less than 60 minutes the stomach is being successfully *punctured* to allow the gas buildup to escape. But even then, the leakage of stomach fluids into other tissues and organs often causes death soon thereafter.

Thus do not ever allow your dog to exercise after food intake.

The problem with Gastric Torsion is, you cannot see or feel if the stomach is twisted, you only see that your dog is struggling with Bloat and you can feel that the belly is firm, hard, and bulging.

When the stomach is severely dilated and congested with gas, it will often rotate about an axis in the plane of the esophagus. This occludes both the entrance to and the exit from the stomach, so that the gas which is produced in the stomach cannot escape in either direction - giving further rise to the distension.

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The stomach may even be deprived of blood, and the spleen is often also enlarged and twisted.

An affected dog may live up to 36 hours with this condition, but most dogs will die within an hour. The rapid development of this disorder is explained by the pressure of the enlarged stomach on the vena cava, the large vein which carries blood to the heart from the abdomen and hind legs.

As a result of this pressure there is an inadequate amount of blood returning to the heart, so that it cannot function effectively as a pump, and therefore the blood pressure of the dog falls. This produces shock and rapid death.

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Who Suffers Bloat or Gastric Torsion

For anatomical reasons, deep-chested dogs like German Shepherds are most susceptible to Gastric Torsion, while any dog can suffer Bloat.

The initial paralysis of the wall of the stomach can have different causes, but there is no doubt that the administration of antibiotics and certain other medicaments is one such cause, because antibiotics destroy the beneficial bacteria in the gut that allow the gut walls to release excess gas.

German Shepherds are at high risk to suffer Gastric Torsion, at an even higher risk are the Great Dane and Bloodhound.

There does not appear to be any association with gender or age of the dog. Gastric Torsion has
been reported in young adults as well as older dogs.

There are no known tests of susceptibility either to Bloat or Gastric Torsion, but it is known that even an entirely healthy dog can suddenly suffer Gastric Torsion after a large dry or fatty or high carb meal combined with exercise!

Industrial dry "food" is the biggest culprit because the stomach needs to extract large amounts of fluid from the body in order to digest the dry "food".

Exercise after a large meal is another big culprit because abrupt movements can readily twist the full stomach (weight is subject to gravity).

**Warning Signs**

The first warning signs can be seen without even looking at the dog:

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- giving the dog a large dry or fatty or high carb meal
- exercise after a meal
- gulping down the meal
- stress during or after a meal
- dog is breathless after a meal (dyspnea)
- excessive passing gas after a meal
- excessively large abdomen (distended)
- dog stands, lies still, or moves only with caution
- **vomiting** after a large or dry meal

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Preventing Bloat and Gastric Torsion

Do not fall victim to the modern myth that industrial dry "dog food" is "balanced and complete". It isn't even food, it's costly toxic waste marketed as the best there can be.

Instead, the only truly balanced and complete food is what our domesticated dogs have been raised on for thousands of years: natural foods, foods from nature! Cooking or steaming the food for better digestion is fine, but that's it, no processing.

Likewise, do not fall victim to the ancient myth of "one dog meal a day". No matter what exercise regime you practice, you cannot possibly keep a larger dog like the German Shepherd healthy if you provide all the food (s)he needs in a single large meal. Rely on common sense, not myths.

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In fact, here probably more than with the other ailments, a planned regime of dog meals, meal times, feeding routine, and regular exercise is the best way to prevent Bloat and Gastric Torsion altogether!

Two or three smaller natural food meals spread over the entire day and a good supply of fresh water as well as regular exercise will make the occurrence of this fatal ailment unlikely, because there will be little gas production in the first place. And regular exercise stimulates stomach and gut activity.

Another important factor in avoiding Bloat and hence also Gastric Torsion is that you get your dog to eat slowly.

However, most eat-slow remedies are ineffective, they don't make the dog eat slower (for example Portion Pacers). And a few eat-slow remedies force the dog to a bite-by-bite treasure hunt or

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they slip all across the floor, both of which causes the dog much distress during food intake which may well lead to Bloat more than a normal bowl would have done!

The best compromise we have found that really make the dog eat slower without causing distress are this stainless steel Eat-slow bowl that we have ourselves, and alternatively this Eat-slow bowl (which is even more effective but made of plastic, surely not ideal to eat from every day).

Both these Eat-slow bowls justify their name, they gently make the dog eat slower. The benefits of slower and more relaxed food intake:

- better digestion
- better absorption of nutrients
- dog feels full quicker
- reduced risk of Obesity

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• reduced risk of Vomiting
• more relaxed and so better behaving dog!
• reduced gas production and passing gas
• reduced risk of Bloat and Gastric Torsion!

Treatment of Bloat and Gastric Torsion

Once Bloat does occur, treatment is difficult, and you don't know if Gastric Torsion is developing too.

Further, at the time you notice that your dog is breathless after a meal, an emergency call may already be too late.

Therefore if you overlooked your own first two warning signs, it may be life-saving that you closely observe your dog after a large dry or fatty

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or high carb meal, and all the more when exercising your dog after such meal (although you would then likely overlook this too).

Unfortunately there isn't much treatment you can do when the stomach is already distended. If you notice that the dog is breathless after a meal, and you touch the stomach and it feels distended, your only treatment option is to render first aid to the dog by puncturing the stomach with a large-bore needle so that the gas can escape.

It is probably best to do this on the right side of the dog over the point of greatest distension. However, note that this not only requires that you get all your confidence together in one of the most stressful moments you can have in your life, but also it is not necessarily successful.

The needle can become obstructed by stomach contents, and there may be a leakage of fluids...
and gas into the abdominal cavity with risk of Peritonitis (inflammation of the peritoneum).

There is no uniformly successful method to relieve the distension. Although a stomach tube can be passed, and this can - theoretically - be done by the owner, this does not help in cases with major twisting of the stomach since the entrance to the stomach is obstructed by the twist in the esophagus.

Nevertheless, if your dog is severely affected and no vet in sight, you may have no choice but to attempt one of these methods to relieve the Bloat before the onset of Gastric Torsion.

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Digestive Disorder

Digestive Disorders (Gastroenteritis, Pancreatitis, etc) are an acquired disorder describing the condition that some part of the Digestive System is "out of order", in disorder.

Meaning, actually Bloat and Gastric Torsion both are Digestive Disorders too. However, here we discuss Digestive Disorders that lead to an inflammation of the stomach (Gastroenteritis) or of the pancreas (Pancreatitis) or of another organ.

This inflammation is activated by the immune system in order to activate the body's defense army to bring the condition in order.

While this healing is underway, Gastroenteritis will make your dog vomit and/or cause Diarrhea in order to rid the body of indigestible foreign material.

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objects, substances or parasites that have caused the disorder. Thus Vomiting and Diarrhea are a natural reflex of the stomach and bowel to help healing.

If the pancreas is in disorder, Vomiting may occur as well but is less likely, and Diarrhea is unusual.

The reason why with Pancreatitis Vomiting is less likely and Diarrhea is unusual is that Pancreatitis is caused by medicaments or a pathogen, neither of which the body normally can get rid of through Vomiting or Diarrhea.

You see, once we understand how the canine and the human organism work, it really is straightforward. Unfortunately, ordinary allopathic physicians have little interest how the canine and the human organism work because they know they'll only earn consistently good income when it doesn't work.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Pancreatitis can result in leakage of digestive enzymes being produced in the pancreas. Then it is a life-threatening condition.

Either way, you see that the inflammation is a good thing, it allows for healing. Therefore do not allow an ordinary allopathic physician to suppress or palliate the inflammation through treatment with steroidal or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs!

Now you see why I always say that whenever you use steroids or NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) to suppress or palliate an inflammation, you prevent self-healing of the body.

As our top immunologist in the Dog Expert Interview and Review Series explains, "it's the most foolish thing to give steroids", and yet every average ordinary allopathic physician does it.

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Of course such vets and MDs alike shouldn't have a practicing licence. The only reason why they have a practicing licence is that this is how they help big pharma to make more money of you.

Got it?

Good.

Indeed, when a vet or MD is about to lose the practicing licence, it's because he or she was considered too critical of their own industry, risking them too much loss of income. **DVM Ron Hines** is one of the many who had to learn this lesson the hard way.

So now, going forward, be a very confident and conscious medical consumer, for the health of your dog as much as for the health of your entire family. And for the benefit of your bank account too.

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Other Digestive Disorders may affect parts of the gastrointestinal tract (GI tract) other than the stomach and the pancreas: the pharynx, or esophagus, or small intestine, or colon, or rectum. Or possibly even the liver, gallbladder, spleen, appendix, or a gland behind the oral cavity is affected.

**Who Suffers Digestive Disorders**

All dog breeds are susceptible to Digestive Disorders because domesticated dogs still are scavengers, they ingest spoiled food and other substances that may cause bacterial, viral, fungal, or protozoal infections.

German Shepherds are no more susceptible to Digestive Disorders than other dog breeds. In fact, since GSDs are so receptive to training, you can (and should) use your dog training to stop...
your dog from scavenging altogether, indoors and outdoors.

Gastroenteritis generally is caused by an infection as a result of a poor "diet". Certain medications can also cause Gastroenteritis, in particular Corticosteroids and anti-cancer drugs.

In addition, abdominal disorders like Pancreatitis and Peritonitis (inflammation of the peritoneum) and metabolic disorders like liver failure or kidney failure can cause Gastroenteritis too. Finally, food intolerances (to corn, wheat, etc) may cause Gastroenteritis.

Pancreatitis primarily affects dogs beyond 5 years of age, and more females than males. However, the highest risk have obese dogs, regardless of age.

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Warning Signs

The warning signs of Gastroenteritis are:

- grumbling noises in the stomach
- **Dehydration**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- lethargy
- lack of appetite
- listlessness
- blood in the stool.

If you find blood in the stool it means that your dog has internal bleeding but you cannot know the cause, therefore best is to take this as a wakeup signal and closely watch every

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If ever you wish a second opinion [see here](#)
subsequent stool. If the bleeding has been in two consecutive stools, you better visit a quality vet immediately.

Unfortunately, although Pancreatitis is the dangerous Digestive Disorder, it does not have a specific pattern of warning signs, instead many are similar to those of Gastroenteritis and other ailments:

- poor diet (industrial crap, or scavenged materials)

- **Vomiting**

- **Diarrhea**

- **Dehydration**

- loss of appetite

- a hunched appearance because of abdominal pain

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• lethargy
• fever
• depression
• **Obesity.**

Actual diagnosis of Pancreatitis is via blood counts and performing a number of chemical tests to check for the enzymes emblematic of Pancreatitis. This can be done as a routine examination during the half-yearly or yearly vet visit.

**Preventing Digestive Disorders**

The best chance to prevent Gastroenteritis is to train your dog not to scavenge, and to train yourself not to feed the modern day table scraps of processed foods, artificial substances, and

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snacks. Or worse, toxic waste products from rendering plants: kibble or dog tin "food".

The best chance to prevent Pancreatitis is to avoid lab medicaments wherever possible, and again, to train your dog not to scavenge.

Treating Digestive Disorders

The most important treatment of Gastroenteritis is to keep your dog well hydrated (which again means no "dry food" at all) and to restore the electrolytes lost through Vomiting or Diarrhea, because they are needed to supply nutrients to the body.

Don't give food after Diarrhea, but provide plenty of water mixed with the starchy water left over when cooking rice.

8 hours after the Diarrhea, start providing a mild supportive meal: the rice itself (has now cooled
down), cooked or steamed carrots, and if you have, some lamb or chicken or turkey. All smoothened with more starchy rice water. A small meal at first. See how your dog responds to food intake.

The best chance to avoid Pancreatitis is to avoid fatty dog meals, whether commercial or when you eat fatty meals too during festive seasons. Keep your dog slim and fit. A GSD wasn't bred to gain the stature of a Rottweiler, a GSD was bred to be athletic!

Every fatty meal is a threat to the pancreas, such that it may suffer an acute failure. More generally, avoid high fat, high protein, high calcium, high sodium diets. In addition, wherever the body is able to quickly self-regulate (for example with Gastroenteritis), avoid all medicaments!

In particular avoid corticosteroids (routinely administered upon any inflammation) and avoid

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antibiotics (against *more than half* of the *major* group of bacterial infections NO antibiotic is effective anyway!). Also avoid Cholinesterase inhibitors that are in insecticides.

For the treatment of Pancreatitis you better seek a **quality** veterinarian immediately, because there is no way to read from the *symptoms* if you are facing a life-threatening condition.

The real problem however is to know whether or not you are dealing with Pancreatitis at all, or "just" with another Digestive Disorder: you saw above that there are no specific warning signs of Pancreatitis alone.

Hence why the earlier advice is so essential: From the outset avoid *routine* prescriptions of medicaments (the common *blanket prescriptions* without that the vet has established the exact *cause* of the ailment). Then you have already ruled out the major cause of Pancreatitis. Now

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you "just" need to establish whether your dog may have caught an infection, and if so which one.

Finally, remember that a half-yearly or at least yearly veterinary examination is advisable, and this will then identify the weakening of any organ, including the pancreas.

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Anal Infection

Anal Infection (Perianal Fistula or Anal Furunculosis) is a progressive disease describing the condition of a chronic lesion around the anus, triggered by pathogenic bacteria or fungi, but caused by a weakened immune system (to fight off those bacteria and fungi).

Note that Anal Infection is not the same as "anal gland" or "anal sac" problems, which describes the condition of an inflammation in or around the anal glands due to a lack of natural evacuation of accumulated toxins.

The anal glands are one of the body’s "detox chambers" that occasionally naturally evacuate excessive toxin levels (those toxins that the body can expel, many it cannot). This is why it can only be considered foolish when ordinary allopathic

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vets recommend dog owners to pay them to remove the anal glands during surgery!

When the anal glands no longer can evacuate naturally - either because they have been foolishly surgically removed, or because of an avalanche of toxins in industrial pet "food", or because ill-advised dog owners manually express the glands - then this can cause an inflammation in the anal area that is different from the Anal Infections discussed here.

Anal Infections can form deep and draining ulcers that can make this condition painful and tough to heal. Conversely, the inflammation from excessive toxin build-up causes itching and is easy to heal:

- Let the anal glands do their job naturally
- and don't cause an avalanche of toxin build-up by feeding industrial crap (some

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uninformed call it "pet food") and/or by administering ill-advised lab medicaments.

Who Suffers Anal Infections

Unfortunately, German Shepherds are one of the main breeds to suffer Anal Infections (one study accounted for 84% of the dogs diagnosed). To some this seems to suggest that Anal Infections are an inherited defect.

However, the larger number of glands in the perianal area when compared to other breeds, and the way the tail is set and carried, both promote growth of bacteria and fungi. So indeed this may be the only reason for the increased incidence of Anal Infections among German Shepherds.

Primarily male German Shepherds are affected, and mostly between the age of 5 to 8 years.

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While most GSDs easily cope with this greater pathogenic attack, ie they *don't* suffer Anal Infections, dogs with a particularly *weak immune system* can contract Anal Infections.

**Warning Signs**

- frequent chewing or licking the perianal area
- scooting the anal area over the ground
- perianal ulcers or bleeding or red or black spots
- foul-smelling discharge in the perianal area
- pain when lifting the tail
- clearly different potty routine
- stool looks clearly different
- lethargy

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If ever you wish a second opinion see [here](#)
The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

- losing appetite
- losing weight
- change in behavior because of discomfort or pain

Preventing Anal Infections

The warm, moist area around the anus and under the tail make an excellent environment for bacteria and fungi to multiply up to the point of an Anal Infection if the immune system is too weak to fight off the pathogens.

As already mentioned above, only dogs with a weakened immune system will develop Anal Infections, while healthy dogs easily cope with an abundance of pathogenic attacks (else dogs wouldn't even exist today).

Again, a weak immune system is caused by:

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• feeding toxic industrial crap "pet food"

• administering ill-advised lab medicaments, foremost immunosuppressants (steroids, NSAIDs, etc)

• over-vaccinating or wrongly vaccinating.

• insecticides in flea and tick spot-ons

• environmental intoxication from carpet adhesives, floor cleaning detergents, yard pesticides, etc.

Likely in this very order. So make sure you avoid all that, in order to prevent Anal Infections (and so much more).

In addition, avoid interfering with the function of the anal glands as one of the body’s "detox chambers": Do not have them surgically removed, and do not manually express them. Either of that can lead to inflammation which then will attract

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many more bacteria and fungi and so can cause an Anal Infection too.

Once started, Anal Infections almost always lead to chronic conditions, not least because ordinary allopathic vets treat them wrongly:

- with ineffective "broad-spectrum" antibiotics

- and/or with the "steroid-sparing" Cyclosporine or the immunosuppressive corticosteroid Prednisolone.

So make sure you avoid ordinary allopathic vets as well.

Be aware that a well-nurtured and not intoxicated canine or human organism does not get sick easily, no matter how many pathogenic attacks the body has to resist!

Evolution made dogs even more resilient than people: historically the dog gene pool

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adapted/improved twice yearly, the human gene pool only once every 20+ years.

Other than that, if you worry too much that your dog might contract an Anal Infection, you may regularly cleanse the anus area with a wipe and strong antiseptic spray. But then make sure you wash your hands thoroughly with an antiseptic lotion before you attend to your dog's anus, and afterwards again.

Speaking of this, a funny note: We once had a Scottish neighbor, she said she wipes her dog's anus after every walk. But then she said she takes her dog in the bed. Thus, at least her strict anus cleansing regiment was a way to somewhat limit her own infection risk.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Treating Anal Infections

Once an Anal Infection occurs, treatment may need to be repeated often, as with all chronic infections. Note that an infection can only become chronic if a bodily disorder facilitates repeated infection.

Thus real cure of Anal Infections requires that you cure the underlying disorder first. This disorder is the weakened immune system, weakened by one or more of the factors mentioned above.

If instead you choose to visit an ordinary allopathic vet, treatment of your dog's Anal Infection will follow their standard blanket treatment. That standard treatment typically looks like this:

1. first visit: ineffective "broad-spectrum" antibiotics (CASH)

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2. second visit: **immunosuppressive drugs like Cyclosporine or the steroid Prednisolone** (More CASH)

3. third visit: **they recommend surgical removal of the anal glands!** (Holiday CASH)

Now just see above again why each and every of these treatment attempts is foolish and harmful.

*After* you have addressed the underlying **immune system disorder** the way laid out above, your further home treatment should look like this:

1. Spray **antiseptic wound wash** on a lint-free clean cloth and move from the outer yet seemingly unaffected areas to the inner clearly affected area in one straight line. Then use a new piece of cloth and repeat, now moving on a different imaginary straight line. Repeat until you've covered the 360 degrees around and towards the

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anus. The direction of the movements must be straight lines, towards the anus. And use a new piece of cloth each time. Both is critical! Do not spread the bacteria from the clearly more affected area to the yet seemingly unaffected areas!

2. After this cleaning ritual, spray the antiseptic wound wash a final time directly around the dog's anus area. Leave to dry. Do steps 1 and 2 three times a day. This is critical for bactericidal and fungicidal efficacy!

3. Continue this daily treatment until at least one full week after the infection seems to have resolved. Again this is critical!

As you may not use the same piece of cloth twice, you will need to use many pieces of lint-free cloth per cleansing session, hence a huge

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number of cloths over a three-week treatment period, yes.

After each session (three times a day), burn the bunch of cloths you used or dispose of them in a separate sealed bin bag. Do not wash and reuse or deposit them where a dog may nuzzle.

Wash your hands thoroughly before and after each treatment with an antiseptic lotion.

Dog owners who overlook any of the many above points tend to argue "nothing helps". But this does help if you precisely follow the suggested treatment, ie including that you address the underlying immune system disorder first.

The only exception where the above treatment plan would not work, and I do not know of any such case, is where:

- the dog's immune system has been weakened so much that it cannot recover

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• and the *particular* bacteria or fungi on the dog's anus are *chlorhexidine-gluconate*-resistant (the active ingredient in Synergy Lab's antiseptic).

*Such resistance is unknown*, hence why I can confidently say the above home treatment protocol *does* provide cure.

A final note: It should be obvious that a dog with an Anal Infection shouldn't be allowed on your bed or the couch. Unless you have *just* cleansed the anus area with a strong *antiseptic spray*, the dog's anus area will be populated with nasty bacteria *all the time*, not just during an Anal Infection.

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Panosteitis

Panosteitis describes the condition of temporary lameness in puppies aged 2 to 14 months due to severe skeletal pain. The cause is not yet fully understood.

Panosteitis seems to be a self-healing inherited defect, not because it primarily affects the German Shepherd breed, but because it only shows at the time of the many biological transitions happening during puppyhood, and it affects male puppies more commonly than females.

For the puppy this period is very painful. Imagine every bone in your body would hurt as if it explodes.

The pain can come and go, and overall it lasts between 2 to 12 months. This means that there
are times of pain and times when the puppy seems fine. Eventually the condition will go away, as spontaneously as it appeared. All of these are characteristic symptoms that clearly differentiate Panosteitis from other ailments.

Reasons why Panosteitis is not yet fully understood is that a specific genetic mutation has not been found, and X-rays of the bones of a Panosteitis-stricken puppy do not always match the clinical signs. Sometimes X-rays reveal that the bones have greater density than is normally found, but other times this is not the case. And yet, when pressure is applied on the bones, the pain increases unusually much.

In other words, the skeletal system cannot be the original cause of this ailment, it seems merely being affected.

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Who Suffers Panosteitis

As said, Panosteitis primarily affects the German Shepherd puppy, and male puppies more commonly than females.

In most cases the worst pain lasts between one and two months but may persist in a cyclic nature for up to a year. Often one or the other front leg is affected first and then the problem tends to move around, making it appear that the lameness is shifting from leg to leg.

Warning Signs

- spontaneous lameness between age 2 months and 14 months

- within days to weeks the lameness shifts from one part to another part of the body

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• the puppy is visibly in pain
• fever may or may not be present.

Preventing Panosteitis

As the cause of Panosteitis is not yet known, neither is how to prevent Panosteitis - other than by stopping the irresponsible inbreeding of course. A Panosteitis test does not exist.

Yet it is certain that Panosteitis affects a dog only temporarily during puppyhood, meaning Panosteitis is self-healing without exception.

While special "puppy diets" high in calcium and proteins are known to cause many health problems and to have no benefit, it is also known that restricting protein and/or calcium intake of a puppy that already has Panosteitis is not helpful either.

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Thus do not follow the current fad to restrict your pup's protein and calcium intake, or worse, to feed a commercial "puppy diet". Both calcium and proteins are essential for puppy development, but they naturally occur in sufficient amounts in REAL foods - from which they can be absorbed, and this is key!

This also means that such food supplements are not helpful either. Save the money. Just share REAL foods with your dog, simple. And for a puppy, you may want to share a diet like I did.

**Treating Panosteitis**

Treatment to cure is not necessary as Panosteitis is self-healing.

And yet, your vet will likely first want to do an X-ray (to amortize the costly equipment). Note that an X-ray does not help at all: There isn't even a

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clear correlation between the amount of increased bone density seen on X-rays and the amount of pain. And an X-ray destroys bone marrow, which is even worse if a puppy!

Next, your vet will likely want to prescribe corticosteroids or other steroidal or non-steroidal anti-inflammatories. Again, this will not help at all (other than making the vet some money), but it will impair the ability of the pup's immune system to combat pathogens, and to self-heal. Now and going forward. Thus avoid that by all means!

Glucosamine and even the top mobility remedies Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM and Yumove do not always help with Panosteitis, which suggests that Panosteitis is not a mobility ailment after all.

With Panosteitis, there are often periods of improvement and worsening of the symptoms in a cyclic manner. This makes the evaluation of any treatment impossible anyway, since many puppies

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will spontaneously recover, with or without treatment, and then relapse.

The same is true for UNtreated puppies, which makes clear that no known treatment actually helps.

However, as Panosteitis is painful for the puppy, treatment of the symptom (pain) does have merit. A good canine pain killer can help the puppy to relieve some of the pain, so that your puppy can enjoy puppyhood regardless.

Other than that, a lot of distraction and play, and gentle exercise will make it easier for the puppy to cope. Avoid all stress for the puppy, thus in particular avoid stress from fear and stress from confusion (not understanding what your commands shall mean).

Obviously, no jumping allowed at all.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Again, this simple home treatment is the best one can do, and the only thing that's helpful.
Arthritis

Arthritis (Degenerative Joint Disorder) actually is a progressive disorder, not a disease as it is commonly referred to ("Degenerative Joint Disease").

Arthritis describes the condition of chronic cartilage inflammation, the cartilage at the joints between bones. This type of inflammation causes pain, and over time the inflammation leads to the degeneration of the cartilage such that the friction of rubbing bones causes even more pain.

Allopathic vets and MDs alike typically portray Arthritis as unavoidable with increasing age and body wear. We know today however that although cartilage naturally deteriorates with age and body wear, Arthritis anytime before old age clearly is a preventable disorder.

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This is because *chondrocytes* and the *synovial fluid* that *nurture cartilage* both are sensitive to poor diet, lab medicaments, and an impaired *immune system*. Immune system impairment too is primarily caused by:

1. **poor diet**
2. improper *vaccination* and
3. *immunosuppressive drugs (steroids and NSAIDs)*.

Thus the better you avoid a poor diet and vaccinations and immunosuppressants, the less likely that your dog (or you) will experience Arthritis early, or indeed at all! Note that many dogs (and people) never experience Arthritis in their whole life.

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Who Suffers Arthritis

Healthy German Shepherds are not more susceptible to Arthritis than other dogs. However, as the joints at hips and shoulders are particularly weak in dogs with Hip Dysplasia or Elbow Dysplasia, German Shepherds with either defect are likely to also suffer Arthritis, and rather early.

In general, purebred dogs are more susceptible to Arthritis as well as other disorders: all types of Allergies, Tumors, Diabetes, Bloat and Gastric Torsion, Obesity, Epilepsy, Hypothyroidism, etc. This is because the same likelihood for genetic mutation impacts on the narrower gene pool in every dog generation.

In addition, larger dogs with a lot of weight put on their joints, and dogs that get little exercise and thus insufficient training to support the

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muscles, are more susceptible to Arthritis. Accordingly *Obesity* is a major contributing factor. Finally, dogs that put undue stress on their joints (eg excessive jumping) are much more likely to suffer Arthritis at some point in life. However younger dogs that are kept healthy would normally only suffer Arthritis if they sustain an injury that puts undue stress on the joints. Again, the easiest way to keep a dog healthy is:

1. **Share only REAL foods with the dog**, don't pay for industrial crap.

2. **Don't pay for unnecessary vaccinations**, and certainly not for "boosters"!

3. **Decline to pay for immunosuppressive anti-inflammatory drugs** (steroids and NSAIDs).

Easy! And saves you a ton of money too!

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Warning Signs

- feeding industrial crap
- over-vaccinated dog (foolish "boosters")
- steroids administration
- overweight dog
- insufficient exercise
- too much jumping
- losing full range of motion
- sitting or lying down awkwardly
- slowing down quickly on longer walks
- cannot get up the stairs, or down
- trouble getting into or out of the car.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Preventing Arthritis

Arthritis can be entirely prevented, or at least delayed or alleviated with:

- **REAL food natural diet** *
- **avoiding unnecessary vaccinations and all "boosters"** *
- **strictly avoiding steroids administration** *
- **regular gentle exercise and playtime together**
- avoiding too much jumping (jumping high is much more harmful than jumping far, say during energetic runs)
- avoiding insecticides in **flea and tick remedies**
- avoiding pesticides in yard care

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• avoiding other lab chemicals wherever possible.

* I trust the repetition of the *life-saving points* sinks in?

Although **Hip Dysplasia** and **Elbow Dysplasia** are finally declining, both forms of dysplasia are still common among German Shepherds, and both promote Arthritis too.

Hence, here you have another reason why you should ensure that, if not *from a rescue center*, you get your (next) dog from a reputable breeder who tests *both* dam and sire for dysplasia (and other *hereditary defects*) *before* undertaking the breeding venture!

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If ever you wish a second opinion *see here*
The key in the treatment of Arthritis is to nurture cartilage tissue via the chondrocytes and synovial fluid. In general this is no different to nurturing any other body cells: You cannot nurture cells with colorful cutely shaped dry mass aka kibble, nor with chips, flips, fries, crackers, donuts, cookies, cake, etc, nor with "joint health" food supplements.

You can only nurture cells with REAL foods, natural foods, unprocessed foods that have the naturally high water content that allows the human and canine organism to absorb the nutrients in the foods! And above I wrote "in general" because damage to cartilage is not readily repaired by the body as cartilage doesn't have its own blood supply. This is why Arthritis treatment takes longer.

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Also consider, even the best nurturing is of little value if you then also provide the organism with known cell toxins:

- **vaccines** are combinations of *weakened or killed* pathogens together with cell toxins as powerful adjuvants
- herbicides in yard care products
- volatile organic compounds (VOC) and surfactants in household detergents and carpet adhesives
- insecticides in [flea and tick remedies](#)
- uncounted allergens and carcinogens in lab medicaments, etc.

Effective treatment of Arthritis *has to* incorporate all of the above: the nurturing of the cartilage tissue and avoiding its intoxication. A *side effect* of this successful cartilage rehabilitation is that it

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will also remove any pain and improve the range of motion for the dog and person alike.

Conversely, what you typically pay for when you see an *allopathic* physician to treat Arthritis is:

1. **first visit:** *analgesics* to relieve pain and *nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs* to further relieve pain via reducing the inflammation (CASH)

2. **second visit:** *steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs* like Prednisolone (More CASH)

3. **third visit:** they recommend joint surgery! (Holiday CASH)

Did you notice how very similar the allopathic treatment protocol for *Arthritis* is with the allopathic treatment protocol for the entirely different condition of *Anal Infections*?

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Think about that. And this although one is a disorder, the other is a disease!

This allopathic blanket treatment protocol is no coincidence: Allopathic treatment options are

- first confined to lab medicaments (plenty of analgesics, steroids, NSAIDs, or antibiotics) - because medicaments have a fairly low barrier to entry for the paying medical consumer: you will go ahead without a second thought!

- and allopathic treatment options often end with surgery - once you got "accustomed" to the much higher price ticket of surgery, you're supposed to conclude: "I went this far, now let's not stop before having tried surgery as well"...!

Also be aware that the treatment attempts of ordinary allopathic vets and MDs generally cause

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more "side effects" than they do good because allopathic physicians focus on the symptoms, not the cause, here of Arthritis.

Thus back to the so much more sensible holistic treatment of Arthritis: In addition to rehabilitating cartilage tissue (nurturing it and avoiding intoxication), Arthritis treatment focuses on strengthening the joints through gentle exercises (ideally in water bodies) and training the supporting muscles (ideally not in water bodies). This in itself usually relieves most of the pain and improves the range of motion too.

Notice that all of this holistic treatment protocol for Arthritis is entirely void of medicaments and does not cause any "side effects" at all!

"But will it instantly relieve the symptom of joint pain from inflammation?"

No.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
"What? Why is it not even trying to?"

Because the inflamed joints and any resulting pain will make the dog (or you) move around with care, taking it easy on the body while under repair: The inflammation starts the healing process - IF YOU LET IT and if you support the healing process (nurturing the cartilage, avoiding cell intoxication etc, see above), not hinder it.

Think: Healing is impossible when the dog (or you) continue to live and "jump around" exactly like before! The prior "lifestyle" is what brought your dog (or you) the misery. The evolutionary purpose of pain is to thwart further damage, to thwart harm to the body!

"Does that mean the dog (or I) have to accept living with pain??"

No. The pain will disappear even before healing is accomplished - IF YOU LET HEALING GET

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UNDERWAY. Imagine you are the parent of your body like the parent of your child. Would you allow your child (body) to continue crossing roads without looking left and right for safety?

No. You would only allow your child (body) to continue crossing roads ONCE IT SHOWS TO BE CAREFUL. Now you may replace "crossing roads" with anything else. Because both dogs and people only made it through evolutionary history to exist today after early dogs and people had learned to pay attention to their bodily pain.

Not to forget, painkillers without anti-inflammatory properties have their merit - ONCE YOU LET HEALING GET UNDERWAY.

Other than this, many dog owners swear on a daily tablet or two of the joint health supplement Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM, which they say has removed all Arthritis symptoms in their dog. So much so that some have claimed that even 12
year old dogs are "suddenly jumping around like puppies again".

And indeed, Arthritis is the main condition where even many allopathic veterinarians recommend the administration of this particular joint health supplement. Either way, note that NO health supplement can replace the need to nurture cartilage tissue with REAL foods, and to avoid cell intoxication.

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Ear Infection

Ear Infection (Canker, Otitis Externa) is a progressive disease describing the condition of infected tissue in the ear canal (or more rarely the middle ear or inner ear), triggered by yeast or other fungi, bacteria, ear mites or other parasites, or rarely by a virus or an environmental irritant.

Further triggers are floppy ears that do not get enough air to absorb moisture (for GSDs only the case with young puppies), swimming in standing waters (which often are infested), roaming through the woods or high bushes, fights with other dogs, draft and dust from tobacco or otherwise.

The most common cause of Ear Infections are poor diet and (earlier) administration of immunosuppressants or of antibiotics, whether

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purposefully as medicaments or unnoticed in meat and dairy, both of which have impaired the immune system.

Why are antibiotics a cause as well?

Because antibiotics have the same effect on every organism: they lead to an overgrowth of yeast and pathogenic bacteria. While none of the mentioned triggers affects every organism: even dogs and people that are subject to the same trigger don't all get an Ear Infection.

Who Suffers Ear Infections

Dogs that aren't fed industrial dog "food" normally never have an Ear Infection in their life. And indeed, we never had a dog with an Ear Infection. Now compare that to the fact that Ear Infections are among the most common reasons for vet visits, and to the fact that industrial dog
"food" is **what's most commonly fed to dogs** these days.

Coincidence? Not all. And **here's why**:

The most common **trigger** of Ear Infections, **yeast infection** (candida albicans), rather **rarely** is acquired in the environment. The same may even be true for many **bacterial Skin Infections**.

What? You must now be wondering **"where does the yeast in all the yeast infections come from, if not from the environment??"**

Good, because exactly that is important to understand: Most yeast infections are acquired **inside** the body.

Just like many pathogenic **bacteria**, **yeast** too **naturally coexists** with all the **beneficial bacteria** in the **digestive system**. There is a constant battle among all of these microbes to become the biggest or **only** force in the gastrointestinal tract.

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(GI tract) - as well as in the mouth, rectum, vagina, and skin, though in healthy organisms here in rather minimal numbers.

And in today's food chain meat and dairy are loaded with antibiotics and steroids (do click the link to digest what you find on the plate there).

These antibiotics and steroids in meat, bones etc cannot be magically "removed" when the pet "food" industry manufactures the cute kibble pieces and rather bland tins from bone and meat waste etc.

Now, when you eat the industrially produced meat or dairy - or when your dog eats the waste of that industrially produced meat and dairy - then your dog (and you and your family!) receive constant doses of antibiotics and steroids with the "food", every day.

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Even without any additional *prescription* of antibiotics and steroids, that's right.

What now happens in your and your dog's GI tract is:

- antibiotics *always* kill the beneficial, often vital bacteria
- while antibiotics are *meant* to kill only pathogenic bacteria
- and antibiotics *never* kill yeast or any other fungi, nor viruses, protozoa, prions, or parasites.

Because antibiotics *only* and *indiscriminately* target bacteria, and they are most successful with the bacteria that have developed no weaponry as their sole function is to enable the body to survive and thrive.

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So, what you have now is the situation that the yeast population is able to grow ever larger in the digestive system (as well as the heavily armed pathogenic bacteria) and they need more room, and so they start to perforate the stomach and gut lining to expand.

This not only results in the so-called leaky gut syndrome (there it is!) but also allows the yeast to piggyback with the bloodstream and via the cardiovascular system to spread into other tissues throughout the body!

Then you or your dog gets sick, and what typically happens is, you take your dog to an ordinary allopathic vet who blanket-prescribes even more antibiotics.

Think about that: You or your dog faces a yeast infection (caused by antibiotics in the "food") and you pay to get it treated with more antibiotics (in

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the prescribed medicaments). How is that gonna help your condition, or your dog's condition?!?

Not at all, of course! And this is why Ear Infections are typically chronic: Too many physicians fail to address the cause!

Whatever. You just saw that yeast infections in dogs as well as people are most often acquired inside the body when diet and/or medicaments allow yeast to proliferate into tissues way beyond its natural habitat in the gut. You also saw that the standard treatment protocol then causes only more trouble, and long-term.

Ear Infections (whether from yeast or not), even if only affecting the outer ear (otitis externa), can be very painful. Even in cases where they don't cause pain, they are always very irritating, leading to discomfort and possibly to behavior changes too.

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If untreated, the infections of the outer ear can quickly grow to affect the middle ear or even inner ear too. Then in addition your dog will feel dizzy and uncontrollable.

As a dog's ears are so crucial to the wellbeing of the dog (for dogs, hearing is the essential sense, while we people rely on vision to navigate the world), we better ensure the best care for our dog's ears.

**Warning Signs**

- tilting the head or shaking the head
- pawing at the ear
- leaning over or balancing problems
- clear changes in dog behavior
- excess ear wax

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• red inflammation
• bad odor from the ears
• frequent scratching
• in severe cases even nausea
• frequent vomiting
• nervous system disorder, up to and including possible aggression.

Preventing Ear Infections

According to the above (Who Suffers Ear Infections), first and foremost: Feeding REAL foods, natural foods, unprocessed foods is the easiest way to prevent Ear Infections too. Even in our times where it has become hard to avoid meat and dairy loaded with antibiotics and steroids.

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Avoiding medicaments that *directly* suppress the immune system (*steroids and NSAIDs*) and medicaments that *indirectly* suppress the immune system (*antibiotics*) also is key in the prevention of Ear Infections: Naturally the immune system plays the vital role in preventing all *infections* (diseases).

Finally, regular **Ear Care** too helps to prevent Ear Infections. You may want to briefly inspect your dog's ears daily or every other day, and also look out for the **warning signs** mentioned above.

Clean your dog's ears *very gently* and remove all dirt, but don't use anything with a sharp end or anything that may disintegrate in the ear!

You can use the **top ear cleanser** and **cotton buds**. But be aware that cotton buds sometimes lose the cotton on the bud, and if this happens while in the ear then you have a sharp end as

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well as a disintegrating tool: the cotton bit will be stuck in the ear.

In addition, consider when the dog jerks while you are having the cotton bud near the ear, that very "counter-force" may make the sharp end injure the ear! So, be extra careful during Ear Care (as well as Eye Care).

Also, your dog may not like getting the top ear cleanser squeezed into the ears, right? My Miguel certainly doesn't like that at all!

To avoid all these challenges, here's what I do:

Most times, first I spray the top wound and skin care on some kitchen paper towel to wipe off the biggest dirt layers from inside the pinna. Once the pinna is reasonably clean, I spray the top wound and skin care on cotton buds, both ends, one after another, and gently roll them through all the ear cup crevices.

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Meaning, I never *poke* the cotton bud in the ear (never apply pressure towards a bud end) because this is what causes tiny ruptures on the pinna that could lead to Ear Infections.

The way I do it, it usually takes 6 cotton buds, times 2 ends, gives 12 *roll-cleanings* per ear. The entire ear-cleaning session does take me about 15 minutes, yes. But the dirt I get out in my opinion justifies the time spent. German Shepherd Dog ears get so quickly dirty!

Plus, *Ear Care* is great for relationship building too, it builds trust if you do it gently.

Why did I say this is how I clean the ears "*most times*"? Because, the *top wound and skin care* is great, applicable in all situations of skin care, and cheaper than the *top ear cleanser*, but it is not preventative ear care, it does not prevent future infections *other* than by keeping the ears clean.

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Conversely, the top ear cleanser leaves an antimicrobial film on the pinna that seems to protect the ears for up to a few weeks. So, every once in a while I use the top ear cleanser instead of the top wound and skin care.

I spray it on cotton buds just like the other. While flushing the ears (squeezing it inside the ears) I usually now leave to a vet visit: better the dog holds a grudge against another person than myself, ha!

Remember to carefully roll the cotton buds inside the ear. And do not get deep into the ear at all: You must always be able to see the cotton-covered end clearly, or else you would affect the delicate middle ear.

The same applies when you clean your own ears: Be exceptionally careful to stay away from the eardrum, to gently roll the cotton bud, and not to lose bits of it inside the ear.

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Treating Ear Infections

To treat an existing Ear Infection that looks mild you can initially proceed as described under Preventing Ear Infections, but be sure to now use the top wound and skin care because this is a more broad-spectrum antiseptic with high efficacy against existing infections.

To treat an existing infection, thoroughly clean the dog's ears at least three times a day as described. As this spray is not an aerosol your dog shouldn't get too agitated, so after cleaning the ears as described you can spray the top wound and skin care directly in the ear to reach areas that you shouldn't even try to reach with cotton buds, because you must never touch the eardrum!

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To treat an existing Ear Infection that already looks severe to you, apply the top pet ear treatment without hydrocortisone. Do not buy the sister product with hydrocortisone: The one without is proven to work better, and the one with is harmful. Why I say harmful?

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Because hydrocortisone is a corticosteroid, an artificial over-concentrated hormone which has dramatic "side effects" with impact on seemingly unrelated body functions. Those "side effects" in fact are the main effect and will cost you a lot of money down the line.

Remember, our aim should always be to get the correct diagnosis, and then to use the most appropriate treatment with the least side effects, especially no long-term side effects. The Zymox Otic Pet Ear Treatment without Hydrocortisone is the most appropriate and effective remedy to treat Ear Infections.

Contrary to allopathic vets, I would not recommend using this on a weekly maintenance schedule, because its future efficacy depends on not allowing pathogens to develop resistance.

If within 24 hours your chosen initial DIY home treatment does not clearly relieve the symptoms,

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that made you start treatment, then visit a quality vet.

Remember, a quality veterinarian will NOT prescribe a blanket antibiotic or even steroid or NSAID treatment! A quality veterinarian will not rely on guess-work, (s)he will identify the CAUSE of the Ear Infection - and highly likely the cause is what I have laid out above.

If your vet does not bother to identify the CAUSE, it's not worth paying anything at all: You would be paying a LOT going forward to rectify the harmful treatment (s)he started. Mark my words.

Also remember that antibiotics will most likely make the Ear Infection chronic. A temporary relief of symptoms is not a sign of cure, but a sign of palliation.

Therefore, once you have your vet's diagnosis of the CAUSE, not of the symptom, consider

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carefully what kind of treatment can actually help your dog, instead of your vet. With Ear Infections, the DIY home treatment laid out above is often all that's needed.
Eye Infection

Eye Infection (Conjunctivitis, Chronic Mucocutaneous Candidiasis, etc) is an acquired progressive disease describing the condition of infected tissue in or around the eye. Contrary to Ear Infection, an Eye Infection is rather rarely triggered by yeast or other fungi.

Most times an Eye Infection is triggered by bacteria or environmental irritants (from high grass to tobacco smoke and chemicals in carpets or in aerosols of room "refreshers"). These solid irritants and airborne chemicals in the environment can lead to micro lesions on cornea or conjunctiva that facilitate bacterial growth.

The cause of most Eye Infections then is a failure of one of the natural defenses at the ocular...

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surface: a combination of anatomical, mechanical, and immunological defense mechanisms.

While viruses, parasites, and poor diet (kibble & co) actually do not seem to have much relevance for Eye Infections after all.

To drill down further into the most common cause of Eye Infections we need to understand the natural defense mechanisms of and around the eye:

- anatomical - eg the bony orbit, and the eyelids
- mechanical - eg tear production, and blink reflex
- immunological - eg antimicrobial proteins, and immunoglobulins.

The combination of all the natural defense mechanisms of and around the eye normally

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successfully prevents the occupation with disease-causing bacteria etc. But if one of them fails (eg due to injury to the eyelid, or reduced tear production, or steroids preventing immunological response) then quickly an Eye Infection can occur: bacteria or other pathogens occupy the eye.

That's when you hear the physician (vet or MD) calling out the symptom "it's conjunctivitis!" or whatever. Now you know that you should immediately counter "yeah of course, but why, what is the cause?"

- is it an anatomical problem (in that case likely due to injury, because remember: diseases are acquired)
- or a mechanical problem - for example note that antibiotics and some other drugs cause nervous system disorders up to and including

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paralysis (wonderfully documented when my new puppy suffered facial paralysis and completely lost body control etc during treatment with the potent antibiotic Doxycycline!)

- or an immunological problem - these are mostly caused by the administration of steroidal and non-steroidal drugs (NSAIDs), but can also be caused by antibiotics: study the route of infection explained under Ear Infections.

And once your physician answered you "why, what is the cause?", you address that very cause, not the symptom. Because, you know what?

Dog owners (and parents!) that allow their vet or MD to address the symptom, the ordinary allopathic physician will address with antibiotic eye drops, oral antibiotics, and/or anti-

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inflammatory drugs! Thus exactly with those drugs that we have just identified as one of the three key causes of Eye Infections, earlier received in form of medicaments or with the food. Shocking, isn't it?

Well, as our top immunologist explains in the Dog Expert Interview and Review series: "... allopathic medicine, primarily what they have is antibiotics and steroids, and so they gonna use that on everything".

Right!

In this context we also need to briefly mention here what is referred to as "chronic mucocutaneous candidiasis": it is not a "hereditary immunodeficiency disorder", as is so widely misinterpreted. That isn't even possible because disorders cannot be inherited!

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Further, "chronic mucocutaneous candidiasis" is not even a *disorder* at all, it is a *disease*, and that's why it is mentioned in this chapter about Eye Infections. Already the name makes that clear: *candidiasis* means *fungus infection* and a fungus is ... a *disease-causing* microbe. Indeed.

Again, do you see not only *that* but *why* so much of the treatment protocols in allopathic medicine get it wrong and make you or the dog *sicker* over time?

That they make you pay for treatments that *cannot* address the *cause*?

Treatments that make your ailment, or your dog's ailment, only *worse*?

Do you see?

I so very much hope you do! Because you notice how much effort I put into it. It feels like I am repeating the same point in every chapter -

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because indeed this is absolutely *relevant* in every chapter!

So may it bear fruit. Then this isn't in vain.

**Who Suffers Eye Infections**

Over the course of their life, most German Shepherds have an Eye Infection at some point, because the GSD is an outdoor dog in most cases, being outside, not always but a lot (less so in nations where the GSD is held as "status symbol" indoors, rather than to guard property or livestock outdoors).

Then, like with [Ear Infections](#), particularly high risk are swimming in standing (and therefore often infested) water, prowling through the woods or high bushes, fights with other dogs, a draft at your dog's crate (or wherever you have your dog sleep or nap), and dust.

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Warning Signs

- pink inside of the eyelids
- inflammation around the eye
- foreign body in the eye
- clear or mucous discharge from the eye.

As you will know, eyes must be a bit moist so don't misinterpret basic eye moisture as an infection-inflicted discharge. You will know best how your dog's eyes normally look.

Preventing Eye Infections

To prevent Eye Infections (and many other ailments), aim to take your dog under an outdoor shower straight after wading through or...
swimming in dirty or salty waters, or walking through the woods or high grass.

If you started showering your dog with a hose when a puppy (above 3 months of age), your dog will be used to it and will usually enjoy it. Just don't use too cold or too hot water. Eight to twelve degrees Celsius below body temperature is fine. So if you can set the shower to between about 23 and 27 degrees Celsius, or 73 to 81 Fahrenheit.

Perform a quick eye check daily or every other day, and compare this with your memory of how it normally looks. A deep look in the eyes of your dog also is a good behavioral and training element to improve bonding.

Also, lubrication of the eyes is important, not only because it washes away eye irritants. If the dog's tear production is insufficient, the eyes will not be sufficiently lubricated.

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When you notice that your dog has dry eyes or is rubbing the eyes a lot, a first quick remedy are self-activating and long-lasting i-drops (don't use the "artificial tears", they dry eyes out over time). Optimal eye lubrication, where needed with the eye drops, will help avoid Eye Infections and also make your dog feel much more comfortable.

**Treating Eye Infections**

When an eye infection does occur nonetheless, in the early stages without signs of an inflammation, again lubricating the eyes is often the most effective, quick and natural solution.

However, if your dog is still rubbing the eyes after one day with this treatment, or if you start to see an eye inflammation, better administer a good antiseptic canine eye wash immediately, three...
times a day. In many cases this will avoid the need to visit a quality vet.

In rare cases where this doesn't help, or whenever you feel that you are dealing with a more serious Eye Infection, you should of course visit a quality vet to get their diagnosis - but not necessarily their prescription!

Be aware that time-pressured vets will often prescribe a blanket treatment with antibiotic eye drops or ointments and potentially even oral antibiotics for this condition. That's not only ineffective but harmful, as explained above.

You may also want to re-read the Important Introductory Notes, in particular Notes 5 to 7 in this regard. Only understanding why the standard treatment is harmful will lead to more critical medical consumers, and thus to more effective and less harmful treatment protocols.

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So, once you have your vet's diagnosis, always consider their suggested treatment carefully. Conjunctivitis too is very receptive to treatment with the antiseptic pink eye spray, and where application of a spray is difficult the antiseptic eye gel is equally effective.

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Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation

Gingivitis, Periodontitis, and related oral infections are a progressive disease, describing the condition of infected gums (gingiva is the name of the gumline around the base of the teeth).

Periodontitis is a follow-up of Gingivitis, describing the condition where Gingivitis has progressed to receding gum tissue, creating pockets of no tissue around the base of the teeth. This gum disease may, and typically will, over time also lead to Caries (tooth decay).

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Trigger of Dental Disease, or more precisely would be Gum Disease, is an overgrowth of bacteria in the plaque layer that is formed on the teeth when the bacteria naturally occurring in the mouth feed on carbohydrates. In particular on sugars, less so on starches, and even less on fibers, all of which are carbohydrates.

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Thus the **cause** of Dental Disease and Gum Disease is a **poor diet** rich in sugars: Sucrose, Fructose, Galactose, Lactose, Maltose, Glucose/Dextrose, Corn Syrup.

Poor **oral hygiene** will aggravate and accelerate the disease, but is no more than a **trigger** because a diet that contains no carbohydrates at all would *not* result in these types of Dental Disease and Gum Disease even if you never brushed the teeth.

Periodontitis is the single most common type of Gum Disease in dogs. It is a **progressive** disease because it spreads with the bacteria all around the mouth tissue, over time even leading to the loss of teeth.

In fact, ultimately Gum Disease can trigger further ailments down the **digestive system** because the overgrowth of bacteria is *ingested* with food and water on a daily basis.

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Who Suffers Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation

Affected are dogs (and people) that eat much sweetened foods (or outright sweets) yet don't compensate for this with immediate tooth-brushing.

Note that industrial pet "food" is both sweetened and salted to extend shelf life. Even where the label of a bag or tin suggests it doesn't contain much carbohydrates (because starchy foods have been left out, which is rare: carbohydrates are cheapest), sugars and salts are added to the product content (but hidden from the label) to make the bag or tin last longer. You could say, to prevent that the waste goes to waste.

Waste? Indeed, industrial pet "food" is waste from rendering plants. The large bags and tins in
the pet "food" aisle all are industrially manufactured.

The same (sweetening and salting to extend shelf life) is with human-grade tin food, as I am currently reminded every day since there is no way to cook yet in our tiny house truck: The only tins I can find here (of foods that I like to eat myself, thus can share with the dog) that have next to no added sugar and salt are ... peas and champignons! Every other tin contains 1% to 2% salt, in addition to sugar, which is way too much.

Peas and champignons. Not a great variety at the moment, I can tell you. Miguel can't "stand" peas anymore. Yet amazing site member Mark sent us a solar cooking tube, thus soon I should be able to cook again and provide variety, yeah!

As we are at the topic, here's where human-grade tin food differs from pet-grade tin food:

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Thanks to enforced laws concerning human-grade foods, our foods are actively sought to be free of toxins. Conversely, thanks to no enforcement for animal-grade foods, pet "food" is actively sought to be full of toxins: the incineration processing is known to create new toxins in addition to those in the waste that enters the incinerator.

At least, those toxins don't contribute to Dental Disease and Gum Inflammation.

The "kibble clean" myth

By the way, it is a myth that when you feed "dry food" (kibble) it would promote oral health. But kibble does promote mouth cancer and a slew of other disorders, that is true, because industrial kibble is toxic and some of those toxins are carcinogenic, the others are allergenic.

The reason for it being a myth is, there is a big difference between shiny teeth and oral health:

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Kibble often makes shiny teeth because dogs do not swallow kibble in whole, and the grinding motion of a hard dry mass over teeth removes the dark-yellow to brown colored plaque and tartar, common sense. So the teeth seem cleaner when you feed kibble. This explains the myth.

But the grinding motion of a hard dry mass over teeth also removes the protective bacterial layer and inflames the gumline. And this is exactly why dogs confined to "dry food" (kibble) so often experience mouth infections and early decay. The other reason is the toxins that kibble contains weaken the immune system to fight those infections.

Like for like, dogs that get homemade food ("table scraps") do not have the shiny teeth of kibble dogs, but much better oral health.

Not to forget: Inadequate toothbrushing (too harsh) causes lesions at the gumline which too

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result in Gum Disease and Dental Disease. Hence why I now link oral hygiene for dogs for a second time.

**Warning Signs**

- bad breath
- gum recession
- **digestive disorders**
- poor appetite due to pain
- ulcers in the mouth
- bleeding gums
- tooth loss
- tooth extrusion
- **bloat**

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• vomiting
• diarrhea
• temperature sensitivity (eg of drinking water)
• feeding any kind of sweetened or very starchy foods or even industrial pet "food".

Preventing Dental Disease and Gum Inflammation

Obviously there's no way to eat or feed the dog a zero-carbohydrate diet. Nonetheless, we all should, and I personally try to, limit carbohydrate intake, both for myself and for the dog.

It is wrong that carbohydrates are the main energy source for a healthy human and canine organism, fats are. The decades-long teachings that "fats make fat" is known to be nonsense,

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carbohydrates make fat - and sick! Because carbohydrates cause inflammation in the cardiovascular system. More on this in a more related topic.

Also, aim to leave out anything sweetened and/or salted, and I mean regardless whether you feed industrial pet "food" or human-grade REAL food, whether from the pot, pan, or steamer, or from tins or a large bag.

In addition, aim to brush the dog's teeth say twice-weekly or even only weekly (regardless that I am currently not doing that myself). "Do as I say, not as I do". Yeah, right.

Important is doing the toothbrushing the right way, using a canine toothpaste and gentle downward movements, not across so as not to hurt the gumline. The same by the way is true for brushing our own teeth: all the TV ads for brushes or paste are very misleading, wrong.

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The systematic *downward* movements are the reason why *brushing the teeth* is far better than providing say a towel to chew on, or the *teeth-cleaning fresh 'n floss tug rope*, or whatever.

In terms of *gentle* movements, ideal is to use a *dental finger* for this. We first had a *plastic toothbrush* but then switched to the new *microfiber model*.

While the plastic brush *is* usable on any finger (for me the smallest) and *does* somewhat protect the finger from the sharp dog teeth, the microfiber brush allows for preciser and thus quicker cleaning movements, *and* Miguel doesn't resist cleaning as much as he did with the plastic brush!

Thanks to documenting it I remember well *when he was a puppy* I thought I was more protected from his erratic puppy behavior when initially I used a toothbrush with a long handle. But
retrospectively I'd say that's worse than using the **microfiber brush** because the plastic brush motivated him to bite on the handle all the time! Like the plastic dental finger then motivated him to bite on it too, with my smallest finger being right in it.

If you are interested, Puppy Care and Puppy Health is of course covered in the *multimedia* and *live New Puppy Diary* as well. Everything is covered.

Some dog owners who don't like to brush their dog's teeth instead add *Plaque Off* to their dog's food, which is quite effective but *inferior* to toothbrushing.

If you wish to do that too, I'd advise *don't* add Plaque Off more than every other day or every third day, and to the latest meal of the day so that it can work overnight as much as possible, but not wear away the teeth's protective layer.

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If ever you wish a second opinion [see here](#)
day after day (because that's how all these remedies work).

Another means to prevent Dental Disease and Gum Inflammation is to have your dog's teeth checked when you visit the vet, thus ideally every 6 to 12 months. If the vet then feels that your dog requires toothbrushing, and you don't mind the extra cost(?), let the vet do it right there, this keeps you out of trouble if your dog doesn't like it.

Note that if you look after your dog's teeth reasonably well then you will likely hear from your vet "Teeth and gums are in good condition", and the vet won't charge you anything for dental treatment anyway. That's how it has been for me everytime.

Conversely, if you don't look after your dog's teeth at all then you may be lucky to avoid related vet bills and just not get that compliment

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Treating Dental Disease and Gum Inflammation

For dental treatment beyond toothbrushing, the average vet will give your dog *general anaesthetics*, because not many vets dare to work on a sedated dog's mouth. While this helps to reduce the dog's stress level *during* treatment, general anaesthetics are taxing on the dog's health and should be avoided whenever possible.

To treat an early Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation yourself, you can spray *Petzlife Oral Care* once around the upper teeth and once around the lower teeth - both in the evening before sleeping, when your dog is most unlikely to drink. But *do provide water 24/7*: when dogs

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feel dry they *need* to be able to take a sip or two like we do. This canine oral care remedy will mix with your dog's saliva and improve oral health (and also promote fresh breath).

The big advantage over the typical (cheaper) *antiseptic mouth wash* is that this dog oral care spray is alcohol-free and presumably does not destroy the oral flora.

You may not know but the typical mouth wash that many men like to take destroys not only harmful bacteria but the oral flora too. *Which is why* those men then have to take the mouth wash indefinitely, or their bad breath is soon unbearable. Exactly! Don't tell me that's not on purpose.

Because in people, *bad breath* is the result of an oral flora that has been destroyed:

1. either by bacteria

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2. or by stomach acids too frequently finding their way to the mouth because of a Digestive Disorder

3. or - most commonly - by mouth wash, indeed!

In dogs, bad breath is the result of an oral flora that has been destroyed:

1. either by bacteria

2. or by feeding industrial dog "food" (just remind yourself of the stench when you open a kibble bag)

3. or by stomach acids too frequently finding their way to the mouth because of a Digestive Disorder.

Therefore, better give your human family members an alcohol-free, natural mouth wash (with the added benefit to cleanse and heal

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smaller oral lesions too), and *if you insist* you could give your canine family members Petzlife Oral Care.

But do *not* give it with every meal as the producer suggests (obviously). Twice weekly or every other day (max) should be okay.

Serious cases of Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation the vet will treat with more antiseptics and a series of costly dental procedures such as ultrasonic scaling, root planning and pocketing in the teeth to remove the affected areas.

Actually diagnosing a Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation starts with a *complete mouth inspection* by the vet. Remember, mouth inspection is *part of the consultation* of a *quality vet*, and so with Miguel we do this too.

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Unfortunately, since 70% of a dog's teeth are below the gumline, an X-ray cannot always be avoided IF the vet must see what is happening below the gumline (because of some visible complication above the gumline). But this is very rare if all is healthy above the gumline - which can easily be seen with the naked eye.

To avoid such serious cases (and the related vet bills!), if you don't like to clean your dog's teeth regularly you could try the top oral health spray. It is quite expensive though. On the other hand, as always, that's relative: Veterinarian dental treatment costs much more.

Important: Be aware that, unfortunately the average ordinary vet will often try to prescribe antibiotics to treat Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation. Again, this is the worst one can do! Do not accept that, do not pay for that. The antibiotics will not be helpful but the antibiotics

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*will make your dog sick, in ways neither the average allopathic vet nor you immediately recognizes.*

All that's really needed is to remove the site of infection and/or to remove the *cause* of the Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation. Therefore the first step is to remove all *sweetened* dog "food" and "treats" from the diet, ideally *feed natural homemade foods only*, then you know exactly what your dog is getting, and it's great food, REAL food.

Some *natural* foods help particularly well with Dental Disease and Gum Inflammation, foremost foods that inhibit the spread of bacteria that feed on sugars (such as glucose and fructose) or on starches (such as oats, wheat, potatoes, corn, peas etc).

Such "bad bacteria" inhibiting foods are for example:

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• *real* meat, ie meat like you would eat yourself, not *the crap that is sold as "meat" in dry "food" bags and tins*

• fermented foods, incl. fermented dairies like kefir

• eggs

• cheese, incl. cottage cheese

• lots of fresh water, no fruit water etc

• leefy greens like spinach, broccoli, kale and other cabbage

• celery

• fish, like sardines, tuna, etc

• garlic

• ginger

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None of these foods bear a risk, forget the gossip. For example, what is bad for dogs (and for people too!) is to eat *unripe* tomatoes, or *many*.

Considering the much lower dog weight, Miguel sometimes gets *one or two* cherry tomatoes among the lots of other foods I have to squeeze in his bowl. And, he's still alive. No surprise.

Also no surprise, this food list matches the *natural food diet* that mygermanshepherd.org has promoted ever since. Because it works. It keeps the dog healthy and strong, and as close to nature as possible in our times.

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Paw Thickening

Paw Thickenings of the kind of Granuloma, Pyoderma, or Interdigital cysts are specific types of Skin Infection, a progressive disease describing the condition of tissue thickenings between the toes of the paw.

The Paw Thickening may already be accompanied by nodular granulated tissue (Granuloma) and/or pus (Pyoderma) around the site of infection. There may even be what looks like interdigital cysts (but often aren't cysts because real cysts typically are follicular cysts or suety gland cysts).

These infectious Paw Thickenings are triggered by:

- (micro) lesions on the paws

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• a hormonal disorder (endocrine system disorder)

• or an allergic reaction (immune system disorder).

When the Paw Thickening (roughly) coincides with an Ear Infection or a Skin Infection elsewhere on the body or it coincides with Hypothyroidism then the trigger is an endocrine system disorder.

When the Paw Thickening coincides with a Skin Allergy then the trigger is an immune system disorder.

The cause of such Paw Thickening almost always is:

• (earlier) treatment with steroidal drugs with high immunosuppressive efficacy

• or a reaction to vaccination (vaccinosis)
both of which have resulted in inadequate immunological response of the **integumentary system**.

You see here again the far-reaching implications of the **allopathic standard treatment** with **steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** (corticosteroids):

- **glucocorticoids** (cortisone, hydrocortisone, prednisone, prednisolone, triamcinolone, methylprednisolone, betamethasone, dexamethasone, etc) and
  - **mineralocorticoids** (corticosterone, aldosterone, fludrocortisone, desoxycorticosterone, etc)

and with **non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)**, eg:

- meloxicam (Metacam)
- carprofen (Rimadyl/Novox)

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deracoxib (Deramaxx/Novartis), etc.

When the infectious Paw Thickening is **chronic** although the dog has **not** received treatment with steroidal drugs, then the **trigger** likely is an **endocrine system disorder**, and the **cause** is a chemical substance in medicaments, "food", household, or environment.

**Who Suffers Paw Thickening**

Most at risk are dogs that receive **steroid treatment**. Most common here are **cortisone, hydrocortisone, prednisone, and prednisolone**.

Now you see why I write everywhere if you get an **ear care remedy** get the Zymox Otic **without hydrocortisone**, **not** the one with hydrocortisone. The one with hydrocortisone doesn't work any better but makes your dog's health so much worse! Very very few **allopathic veterinarians**

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understand the **ramifications of prescribing** **steroidal drugs**. Those that do prescribe them anyway so that you come back. Or else why would they?

Indeed, in most places you will read things like "**steroid treatment has its uses if done right**". But that's **not** right, for the **reasons I summarized** **here** and **here**.

The fact that Paw Thickening often occurs soon after a **vaccination** "booster" strongly suggests that **vaccinosis** (sickness **because** of vaccination) plays a role as well. This is unsurprising: A vaccine **injection** shocks within seconds **all body systems**, and due to proximity the first **symptoms** become visible as skin condition and/or gastrointestinal condition.

Other than dogs that have had **steroid treatment** or **vaccine injection**, dogs that are a lot outdoors (like many German Shepherds) are more likely to

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experience (micro) lesions to their paws, from a grass seed, stick, gravel, de-icing salts, cleaning chemical, or even ingrown toenail. Such lesion may then quickly harbor bacteria that a weakened integumentary system may be unable to defeat.

So then most ordinary allopathic veterinarians prescribe antibiotics. And promptly they make it worse: Contrary to popular belief, antibiotics always impair the health of the immunological defense mechanisms because antibiotics lead to an overgrowth of yeast and pathogenic bacteria.

In addition consider this: When your dog feels discomfort or pain at a paw, the dog will lick or even bite the paw. Whatever was on the paw (pathogens, salt, chemicals) will be ingested and can lead to additional ailments like Digestive Disorder, Dental Disease or Gum Inflammation, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Dehydration, and in

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extreme circumstances may even set the course for a **Tumor**.

This is why the seemingly harmless Paw Thickening so often leads to *seemingly unrelated* further ailments soon thereafter. A quality [holistic veterinarian](#) will associate one and the other and address the cause. The average [allopathic veterinarian](#) will not, yet happily treat each new [symptom](#) on its own. As a welcome "side effect" this gives more cash too.

**Warning Signs**

- Paw Thickening typically are between the toes or on top
- Hard thickening of skin, normally no color change

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• even if you only gently squeeze it the dog will retract in pain
• frequent licking or biting the same paw
• possibly limping on the affected leg
• restlessness, nervousness from discomfort or pain

Preventing Paw Thickening

Preventing Paw Thickening is quite easy:
• Take the time to actually look at your dog every day, instead of subconsciously seeing the dog (say like a road sign). I take this conscious look when I brush the dog (every day, indeed). The benefit: You also feel skin changes.

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• As for Paw Thickenings, lift each paw for a glance underneath as well.

• This way, before a problem emerges you may notice it, and you can address it.

To prevent micro lesions (first trigger):

• **Before walks**, consider the terrain and if reasonable protect the paws: Pawz *disposable and reusable dog boots* can be helpful (if the dog is well exercised and so nails are short), or on rough terrain better are these *High Performance Boots*.

• Also, **during walks**, watch for things like broken glass, nails, gravel, and sharp concrete.

• **After walks**, consider using an outdoor *shower* or whatever to wash off what your dog would otherwise lick off and thus *ingest*.

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• Briefly inspect the paws and remove any foreign objects. You may disinfect the pads with an antiseptic wound spray when your dog stepped in feces or vomit, chemical residues, or other likely contaminated soil.

• Do not exercise your dog on hard surfaces like concrete or gravel.

• Avoid rough, icy, de-iced, hot, or chemical-affected surfaces.

• To strengthen and protect the paw pads, Musher's Secret is great (although for unknown reasons my Miguel hates the smell and thus resists its use).

• If your dog isn't exercised enough, manually trim the dog's nails so that they don't catch on anything and tear.

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To prevent an endocrine system disorder and immune system disorder (second and third trigger):

- Never accept and pay for steroidal drugs.
- Avoid all superfluous vaccinations: multivalents, "boosters".
- Carefully consider chemical substances in medicaments, industrial "food", household, and environment.

With all the above lists you achieve way more than preventing Paw Thickening.

### Treating Paw Thickening

To treat Granuloma, Pyoderma, and related Paw Thickenings, standard allopathic medicine recommends various cortisone-based and antibiotic powders and ointments. None of them

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The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

gives healing, as is known from medical history logs. Yet all have "side effects", as is known from follow-up visits. The dog generally ends up in trial-and-error treatments that improve the vet's bank account but worsen the dog's overall health.

This is why at MYGERMANSHEPHERD.ORG we always so strongly advise against paying for the blanket treatment protocol of allopathic medicine: steroids and antibiotics, like here as well (indeed cortisone is a glucocorticoid, a steroidal drug).

Here's what we suggest you do instead, if prevention comes too late and your dog already shows signs of infectious Paw Thickening:

1. Remove foreign objects and pathogens from the paw to curtail continued infection

2. Strengthen the dog's immunological response

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3. Avoid all intoxication of the body's cells

If you truly pursue each of these steps, the Paw Thickening likely will resolve within a few weeks only, and there will be no "side effects": related new symptoms.

As for 1) To remove foreign objects from the paw, carefully use tweezers, wash the paw well under running water, and then apply a strong antiseptic wound spray.

To remove pathogens from the paw, applying the antiseptic wound spray three to nine times a day is sufficient.

If the paw pads are dry, chapped, or cracked, apply Musher's Secret, and if it looks too bad protect the paws with Pawz disposable and reusable dog boots or the better Protective Dog Boots. If covering only the affected paw makes

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your dog nervous or aggressive, you may need to cover two or all four paws.

Small wounds must be washed out under *running water*, then treated with *antiseptic wound spray*, and once dried (within 20 seconds max), immediately *hard-bandaged* or *soft-bandaged* before you cover the paws with either of the dog boots. *This will make the paw heal*, anything else will make you see and pay the vet.

Therefore, better stick with this both *effective* and *appropriate* *antiseptic treatment*. Another advantage of a *strong antiseptic spray* is that if applied regularly it is effective against virtually all strains of the three major types of pathogens: bacterial, viral, and fungal *infections*.

Compare this for example with *Tinactin*, which is only effective against *some strains* of fungal infections only, and you understand the enormous

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benefits of using the right remedy, and without any "side effects" whatsoever!

In addition, you would first need - and pay - a vet to determine if it is a fungal infection at all. And once there, the average vet will then try to sell you the antibiotic and/or cortisone-based remedies mentioned above - likely plus a bag from the dog "food" shelves that every allopathic veterinarian has these days. No other physician than veterinarians sells products. Think about that!

Concerning bandage, don't rely on the bitter taste of bandages that claim they will deter the dog from scratching or chewing the affected area - they won't in most cases. Foremost at night when the dog is alone the dog will start paying attention to the affected area. That's why it's often ideal to cover all four paws with either of the dog boots, not just the affected one.

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If a wound *seems* large or bleeds much:

1. **spray the antiseptic**
2. **hard-bandage** it
3. and visit a **quality vet** immediately.

As for 2) To **strengthen the dog's immunological response**, proceed with *our* standard treatment:

1. Feeding a **healthy variety of natural foods only**.
2. Allowing the *entire immune system* to practice, to train, to gain more experience through **natural immunization** wherever sensible. The sensibility check is the long list that comes next.
3. **Avoiding stress from the Pack conflict** as perceived by the dog, and from fear.

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As for 3) Avoid all intoxication of the body's cells:

1. NOT vaccinating the dog unless a prior titer shows no reaction at all to the antigen in question.

2. NOT vaccinating a puppy unless a prior titer shows that the passive immunity from maternal antibodies has now worn off, and so the vaccine can be effective, while before it cannot!

3. NOT allowing multivalent vaccines to be given where single vaccines are available, ie the common vaccine combinations all the way through to DHLPPCv are a strict no-no!

4. NOT accepting a "booster" vaccination unless a prior titer shows no reaction at all to the antigen in question.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
5. NOT vaccinating a dog that is sick or has been sick in any way in the last three months.

6. NOT vaccinating a dog against diseases that are highly unlikely to be contracted in the particular dog's living environment and given the dog's lifestyle.

7. NOT vaccinating a dog against diseases that are neither life-threatening nor a permanent material impairment of quality of life.

8. NOT vaccinating a dog where the dog's lifestyle and living environment provides for the much better natural immunization because it is complete and general: it trains the entire defense system.

9. NOT exposing the dog to environmental intoxication in the house or yard (floor

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cleaners, adhesives, wood stains, pesticides etc).

10. NOT exposing the dog to cell toxins in industrial dog "food".

11. NOT ever accepting corticosteroids or other steroids or NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).

12. NOT allowing antibiotics treatment unless:

a) A culture has been grown in the lab and it confirmed that the pathogen in question indeed is a bacterium.

b) AND the bacterium is known to not yet be resistant against the suggested antibiotic.

c) AND the disease caused or triggered by the bacterium is life-threatening or a permanent material impairment of quality of life.

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d) AND a less harmful natural treatment option is unknown - because contrary to the marketing of allopathic medicine antibiotics always are harmful!

Do click the links to understand why.
Hind Leg Weakness

Hind Leg Weakness (Posterior Paresis, Paralysis) is ordinarily caused by pressure, injury, or degeneration of the nerves of the part of the spinal cord that is associated with the proper functioning of the hind limbs.

The cause may be hereditary (eg Osteochondroma), an injury (back injury), or even an allergy (eg from a tick allergen).

Where caused by heredity or an allergy, the trigger typically is an immune system disorder that degenerates nerves in the spinal cord - and not just those responsible for hind limb movement.

Foremost, immune system disorders result from one or more of the terrible four:

1. treatment with steroids or NSAIDs

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here 242/544
2. antibiotic treatment

3. intoxication through "food" (toxic industrial pet "food") or intoxication through the living environment (floor cleaners and carpet adhesives in particular)

4. tissue allergens, and chemical cell toxins in the adjuvants, of vaccines.

The Paralysis is not painful but very irritating for the dog since the dog cannot judge the position of the limbs.

Although the condition stops progressing further when the dog's skeleton reaches maturity, at that point it may already be too bad for the dog to walk at all. Luckily this end result is rather rare. A cure however is yet unknown.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Who Suffers Posterior Paresis

Except where an injury (in which case it can affect dogs of any age), Hind Leg Weakness is a disorder in young dogs where abnormalities of bone and cartilage in the vertebral canal cause compression of the spinal cord.

Considerably less than 1% of German Shepherds are diagnosed with this Paralysis. Part of the reason however is that ordinary veterinarians are unable to diagnose this condition as such.

Warning Signs

The condition may develop gradually with signs of progressive lameness that finally culminates in paralysis, but more often it occurs suddenly. The affected dog is gradually or suddenly unable to...
coordinate voluntary movement of the hind limbs, one after the other.

When paralysis sets in, the affected limbs may hang limply or they may acquire a characteristic stiffness.

**Preventing Posterior Paresis**

Easiest to prevent is *injury* as the cause of Hind Leg Weakness. Most injuries of dogs occur following traffic accidents and following excessive jumping.

Thus avoid much jumping on hard grounds like asphalt or on uneven grounds like gravel, and pay particular attention to *traffic training* during your outdoor dog training exercises. If you have the *multimedia New Puppy Diary* you saw how much effort I put into systematic traffic training when

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Miguel was a puppy. It paid off: he's still alive, despite being an off-leash dog in the city.

Hind Leg Weakness due to an allergy also is pretty easy to avoid:

- No vaccination at all before the maternal antibodies have lost effectiveness
- No vaccination "booster" ever, unless a prior titer shows no reaction at all to the antigen in question
- A decisive "NO!" to the routine x-ray attempts of ordinary allopathic veterinarians
- A decisive "NO!" to the routine antibiotic treatment attempts of ordinary allopathic veterinarians
- A decisive "NO!" to the routine steroid treatment attempts of ordinary allopathic veterinarians

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
• A decisive "NO!" to the healthy-happy-puppy propaganda in ads of the pet "food" industry

• Feeding only natural REAL foods

• Avoiding chemical floor cleaners and carpet adhesives.

Note that 100% effective and safe is to have slip-proof tiles cleaned with a steamer.

Hind Leg Weakness due to heredity can be prevented too: at the breeder. Dogs must not be bred where the dam or the sire shows any sign of sickness at all! Wonderfully highlighted by our top dog expert in Interview & Review #1.

Thus do not reward such (backyard or professional) breeder by parting with your money for such a puppy!

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Treating Posterior Paresis

The condition may be rather mild, in which case it is often transitory in nature and responds well to routine treatment:

- REAL food nutrition
- massage
- hot packs
- nerve tonics
- nerve impulse stimulation
- mobility aids such as the Rear Harness.

In cases where the condition is severe it may however be entirely resistant to the above routine treatment.

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Where the condition shows only transitory, more rigorous mobility support like the Lift Harness or even the Rear Wheelchair may be adequate.

While where the dog is permanently affected, all forms of mobility support may become too stressful for the dog.

Surgery is not an option for this condition, once degenerated the nerves cannot be restored.

Early diagnosis is crucial to prevent progression and to restore the dog's control over the hind limbs.

Where the paralysis is due to an intestinal obstruction that exerts pressure all the way to the nerves in the spinal cord, the elimination of the obstruction usually results in the disappearance of the paralysis if undertaken early. This may be done by an enema, internal manipulation with instruments, or surgery.

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However if this treatment does not restore the dog's mobility within about seven days, the obstruction was not the cause, or treatment came too late.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
von Willebrand Defect

"von Willebrand Disease blood disorder" is a double misnomer, vWD is neither a disease nor a disorder, it's a defect: An inherited deficiency in the blood clotting factor vWF (von Willebrand Factor), a fibrin protein that in healthy individuals helps the blood's platelets to bond, forming a clot that stops the bleeding.

The von Willebrand defect (vWD) is the most common bleeding defect, and hence discussed here. But note that there are others, for example the rare bleeding defect hemophilia (also both in people and in dogs), and even rarer is an acquired bleeding disorder.

vWD describes the condition that there is a mutation existing in the genetic code that causes prolonged bleeding after injury, surgery, dental...

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work or the like in every dog that has this mutation.

As with people, vWD in dogs has been classified into three types: vWD type 1, 2, and 3, with a further four subtypes of type 2: A, B, M, and N. All based on the concentration and quality of plasma vWF in the affected dog or person.

It is now known that vWD type 1, 2A, 2B, and 2M are subject to dominant inheritance (one vWD parent is enough to pass it on), while vWD type 2N and type 3 are subject to recessive inheritance (only passed on when both parents have it).

Fortunately, the vast majority of both people and dogs have vWD type 1, the mildest form of bleeding defect. So mild that most people and dog owners don't know they have it.

Note that only DNA testing provides assurance over vWD, an ELISA antibody blood test does not.

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because the amount of vWF in the blood naturally fluctuates over time. However, these days DNA testing whether a dog carries the defect or not can be done with simple mouth swab DNA test kits.

**Who Suffers vWD**

vWD equally affects male and female dogs alike because the gene mutation is not on the sex chromosome (X).

- vWD type 1: ~70% of all vWD cases, the mildest form, affected are a wide variety of dog breeds, foremost (in this order): Doberman, Manchester Terrier, Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Bernese Mountain Dog, and Poodle.

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- vWD type 2 and all subtypes: ~25% of all vWD cases, affected are almost only pointing breeds, like the German Wirehaired Pointer.

- vWD type 3: <5% of all vWD cases, the most severe form, affected are primarily Shetland Sheepdogs and Scottish Terriers.

Fortunately, vWD in German Shepherd Dogs is rare compared to all those breeds above (any type of vWD).

Since vWD is hereditary, *both* parent dogs of the commonly affected breeds should be tested for this *defect* before breeding. Genetic testing is of importance also because an affected dog should *not* be administered certain drugs (see further below). And if done during bleeding episodes then administering those drugs can be fatal!

Be aware that vWD does not always show as external bleeding, it can be hidden internal

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bleeding, most commonly bleeding into joints. This then misleads ordinary allopathic vets to believe the dog has ordinary Arthritis - which with dogs 6 years of age and younger should never be accepted as diagnosis: such young dogs almost certainly have something else.

Remember here that allopathic vets don't diagnose the cause of a condition, only mere symptoms, and for example bleeding into joints triggers the same symptoms as Arthritis. Hence why when they only look at symptoms and they fail to address the cause, they never achieve cure - and soon you go back with more symptoms.

Warning Signs

- prolonged nosebleeds that seem inexplicable
- prolonged gum bleeding that seems inexplicable

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• prolonged bleeding from minor cuts to paws or elsewhere
• black and tarry stool or blood in the stool that seems inexplicable
• blood in the urine that seems inexplicable
• **Arthritis symptoms** in young dogs, where in fact these symptoms may result from bleeding into the joints.

**What is "prolonged" bleeding?**

The *normal* bleeding time depends on where the bleeding occurs, and can be anywhere between 1 to 10 minutes. This means, if your dog is bleeding anywhere on the body for more than 10 minutes, the *cause* could be an *inherited* bleeding *defect*, or *rarely* the *trigger* could be an *acquired* bleeding *disorder*.

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Prolonged bleeding is a big risk: Without immediate medical attention an injured dog or person may bleed to death. Surgery is high risk too, despite that medical attention is right there.

**Preventing vWD**

As with all inherited *defects*, the key to prevention is to *not* breed affected dogs and then even have uninformed dog owners *pay* for the handicapped puppies! Unfortunately many dog breeders (backyard and professional breeders alike) are just as uninformed - or unscrupulous.

If ever you plan to *pay* a breeder good money for a dog (rather than a processing fee to a shelter), I would strongly suggest that you help to prevent *all* inherited defects: *Insist* that the breeder *pays* for all available genetic tests for *both* parent dogs.

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before you emotionally grow attached to a dog from the breeder (this is the breeders' trick).

Thoroughly review the documents showing that both parents were found to be free of all genetic defects. And insist on this change in their proposed contract: If the dog that you pay good money for later turns out to have any inherited defect, the breeder will have to pay you 5 or better 10 times the amount you paid them.

It is now that the dishonest breeders will walk away. And at some point they will leave the market altogether if only most dog owners insist on this kind of contract. Because no law, only financial pain gets uninformed or unscrupulous people to become considerate.

Be aware that the German Shepherd breed too is in such bad state these days because in past days few dog owners have been as strict as is

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necessary to stop breeders from acting irresponsibly.

For key GSD countries we have ever growing directories on mygermanshepherd.org:

- **Rescue Directories**
- **Breeder Directories**

Also note that if you, or the breeder, have "observed that the dog or the breeding parent dogs don't show symptoms of genetic defects", this doesn't say much at all: many defects are not outright symptomatic, they show only later in life or only in specific circumstances.

This is why some physicians rightfully make the point that vWD typically *does* require a trigger before the inherited gene defect actually prevents proper blood clotting. In other words, there are known cases of incomplete penetrance, where the
gene defect exists but not yet the symptom, blood clotting is not yet reduced.

The only proof of absence of genetic defects is genetic testing for those defects.

How to avoid bleeding incidents

If you have a dog with (suspected) vWD, hemophilia, or a related bleeding defect, you must try to avoid activities where the dog could sustain an injury that would lead to bleeding, external or internal. Easier said than done, with a dog like a GSD, I know.

In particular aim to avoid:

- dog fights
- rock-hard chew toys
- cutting into the quick during nail trimming

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• breeding a female dog, giving birth
• surgeries, including spaying/neutering
• any exercise where injury is likely, including those involving jumping.

Note that some injuries lead to *internal* bleeding that you won't notice but that poses the same risk as a visible laceration!

**Treating vWD**

If you notice some of the *warning signs* of vWD and you are concerned that your dog may have a bleeding defect, it would be sensible to rule out genetic bleeding defects as the *cause* *before* you embark on the *allopathic odyssey* of addressing ever more *symptoms*.

Remember here our research result that *most* veterinarians are much more costly than what you

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pay at your first visit, because the allopathic treatment protocol of treating symptoms typically causes more health problems than what you came for.

If the bleeding seems severe to you, or even if it is very minor bleeding (say from the gums) that doesn't seem to stop even after an hour or more, obviously visit a quality veterinarian right away. Or better, if you live close, take your dog to an animal hospital. That's where quality veterinarians are much more likely to be found if they learned of the differences of medical belief systems.

Either way, make sure the vet identifies the cause of the prolonged bleeding. Do not pay for a diagnosis that merely gives some symptoms a name so that the veterinarian can justify the prescription of some drugs!

To treat vWD medically, a lot has been trialled but at the time of writing nothing works reliably for

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every dog. Very few drugs seem to help some affected dogs (not all dogs), and their active ingredient typically is desmopressin acetate which causes severe allergic reactions in most dogs.

Basically you are trading a little bit of vWD relief for a lot of mental and physical demise of the dog. Since you even have to pay for that, you may not find that a good bargain.

A more costly medical alternative is transfusion of blood or plasma of a healthy dog with the same blood type, or recombinant blood clotting factors. To increase the vWF blood clotting potential in the donated blood or plasma, sometimes the donor dog is given desmopressin acetate, but that's equally bad for the donor dog then.

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What to do in an acute bleeding incident

In the case of bleeding that doesn't seem to stop as described above, have a self-assembled dog first aid kit at hand, and be sure you practice quick application of band aid plaster, of bandaging tape with a dressing, and of liquid bandage. Because in a case of a bleeding defect, swift action can make all the difference.

If a surgery is unavoidable, the vet will try to substitute for the lack of proper blood clotting proteins with medicaments including their "side effects" like I mentioned above. For now, there is no known cure for vWD. Hence why avoiding bleeding incidents for affected dogs is critical.

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Medications that spark or aggravate bleeding episodes

Since ordinary allopathic vets even vaccinate sick dogs(!) and prescribe steroids at the same time(!), you cannot rely on your vet to avoid problematic medicaments. So better take note yourself that the subsequent medicaments are particularly risky for vWD dogs, or more generally, risky for dogs with prolonged bleeding:

- Steroids and NSAIDs
- Aspirin
- Ibuprofen
- Antihistamines
- Phenylbutazone
- Sulfa-based antibiotics

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There are certainly more vWD risky drugs, since new drugs are being developed all the time. Make sure you consider all the points raised above when you assemble your dog's first aid kit. No off-the-shelf kit is complete, and less so, suitable for a vWD dog.

Finally, dogs with vWD must be spared stress because stress aggravates bleeding episodes too. Most stress in dogs comes from the Pack conflict a dog experiences in the family Pack, because

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such Pack conflict causes permanent stress, even more stress than fear (say of another dog, or of thunderbolts).

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Lumbosacral Stenosis

Lumbosacral Stenosis (Cauda Equina Syndrome) is a result of a form of Arthritis of the joint between the last lumbar vertebra and the sacrum, which is one of the bones that makes up the pelvis.

This Arthritis narrows the canal where the spinal cord and nerves pass through. The intervertebral disc between the vertebra and the sacrum is often abnormal as well, further narrowing the canal.

This canal and disc defect put pressure on the nerves coming off the spinal cord. The condition results in severe backpain, pain in one or both hind legs, or pain in the tail. The pain can make your dog quite stiff at the rear, and change the mood drastically.

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Who Suffers Lumbosacral Stenosis

Lumbosacral Stenosis is fairly common in German Shepherds and some other larger dog breeds. It can affect both male and female GSDs, though it usually does not occur before the dog is 3 to 7 years old because its precursor, Arthritis, rarely occurs earlier.

Warning Signs

- whining and other signs of pain
- pain in the back, in one or both hind legs, or the tail
- nervousness
- seeking your comfort, or hiding away

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• difficulty rising after lying down
• clear signs of stiffness during initial steps
• lethargy
• possibly not able to move the tail, or whining when you move the tail
• shuffling gait
• scuffing toes
• chewing on pelvic area, hind limbs, or tail (where it hurts)
• difficulty urinating or defecating
• later possibly incontinence

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Preventing Lumbosacral Stenosis

Since Lumbosacral Stenosis is a result of Arthritis, it would seem obvious to avoid Arthritis in the first place in order to avoid Lumbosacral Stenosis too. So see Arthritis.

Treating Lumbosacral Stenosis

Medical diagnosis of this defect is through physical exams, reflex testing, ultrasound, or x-raying after injecting dye into the affected area.

Depending on the severity, the dog's health and other factors, standard treatment of diagnosed Lumbosacral Stenosis is surgical or nonsurgical.

Note that the standard nonsurgical treatment (6 to 8 weeks strict resting together with anti-inflammatory medications) does not provide cure,
only temporary relief from the symptom (pain) for as long as medication is given.

This relief can be achieved with harmless painkillers, hence why the standard nonsurgical treatment with anti-inflammatory medications is foolish. Anti-inflammatories prevent any chance for self-healing by the body and cause countless costly health problems down the line.

The non-standard, more sensible and much more effective treatment is to remedy the precursor of Lumbosacral Stenosis, Arthritis. The top remedy to treat Arthritis is Nutramax Dasuquin with MSM, and so this is the first choice for Lumbosacral Stenosis too.

Obviously no remedy can reverse the narrowing of the spinal cord canal once it has taken place. However, as Nutramax is effective for Arthritis it often stops progression of Lumbosacral Stenosis within about two weeks of the start of treatment.

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Dogs who are mildly affected by Lumbosacral Stenosis may then be able to return to normal function.

But for dogs who are already incontinent or unable to urinate prior to treatment, the prognosis is much poorer. For example, for dogs who have difficulty or are unable to urinate, the bladder must be manually expressed several times a day.

In severe cases, the stress on the dog and the owner is too much for treatment, and the dog is better put to sleep. This is why prevention is best and so treatment should start at the onset of Arthritis. Better even, preventing Arthritis altogether.

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Skin Infection

Skin Infection is an acquired progressive disease describing the condition of infected tissue anywhere on the body other than where it has been given a more specific name, like say Ear Infection or Anal Infection. Therefore much of what I wrote in Ear Infection and Anal Infection applies here just the same way.

A key difference is that a Skin Infection say on the belly, flank, or back is more often triggered by bacteria, not by yeast. Likewise parasites like mites or fleas rarely are a trigger here, normally only with untended stray dogs. But environmental irritants are more common triggers than with Ear Infection and Anal Infection.

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Another trigger is high skin pH, but its commonness cannot be assessed because skin pH testing is so rarely done.

The most common cause of Skin Infections too is:

1. poor diet

2. administration of immunosuppressants or antibiotics, whether purposefully as medicaments or unnoticed in meat and dairy

3. needless and yet harmful vaccination "boosters"

All of these impair the immunological defense mechanisms, part of which are the Langerhans cells of the integumentary system. So now pathogens can occupy the skin, triggering an infection. Pathogens that a healthy integumentary system routinely controls, both in terms of number and type of pathogens.

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In today's food chain meat and dairy are loaded with antibiotics and steroids, and the meat and dairy that is tested and found to be too much contaminated for human consumption is used for animal feed nonetheless: The largest groups of buyers of contaminated meat and dairy are the farm feed wholesale industry and the pet "food" industry.

When you click the above links you will understand the exact process how antibiotics and immunosuppressants cause Skin Infections.

The average allopathic physician however likely does not know this process and will merely diagnose your dog's Skin Infection as either Pyoderma or Dermatitis or Hot spot. All of these are no more than the name for a symptom, and so that diagnosis isn't worth a penny.

Hopefully you won't accidentally pay for that. Or worse, also pay for the standard drugs that this

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average allopathic physician will then want to prescribe: **steroidal anti-inflammatories, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, antibiotics**.

So let's briefly get these three *symptom names* out of the way, so that we can focus on *cure* - instead of the all too common *palliation or suppression* of mere *symptoms*.

**Pyoderma** is *just the name* for a *pyogenic bacterial Skin Infection*:

- *pyogenic* means producing pus
- *bacterial* means *triggered* by bacteria
- and *Skin Infection* - well, you just read that at the start of this chapter.

Note that the *name* for the *symptom* "Pyoderma" leaves UNanswered:

- **why** is the body producing pus?

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what strain of bacteria is it?

and most critically, has the physician identified the cause of the Skin Infection?

Next, Dermatitis is just the name for an inflammation of skin tissue. That's all.

As you know from clicking the link to the definitive Periodical that gives you all the key medical knowledge in a nutshell, an inflammation is the response of the defense system to a disease, disorder, or defect.

Here, the response to a disease because we look at Skin Infection. However Dermatitis can also be the name of an inflammation in response to an allergy, and in fact Skin Allergy is way more common than Skin Infection.

This is because diseases are comparatively rare these days, disorders are way more common, and an allergy indeed is a disorder.

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Note that the name for the symptom "Dermatitis" leaves unanswered why does the defense system respond with an inflammation, what's causing such response?

In fact, the diagnosis "Dermatitis" does not even specify what triggers the inflammation? It may again be bacteria like with "Pyoderma", but maybe it's a fungus or parasite?

In rare cases the inflammation is triggered by a virus or protozoa. Most times the inflammation is triggered by an allergen, thus it is the response to a disorder, not to a disease.

So if your physician merely diagnoses "it's Dermatitis", (s)he neither knows what causes nor what triggers the inflammation. I wouldn't pay a penny for that. Nor for the then prescribed blanket treatment: "Treatment consists of steroids". Click the link to verify that most physicians say exactly that!

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Make sure you always click all new links here to see the proof of what I am writing, else you might wrongly be thinking I am making things up, lol!

Finally, **Hot spot** is yet another name for inflamed skin, or "Dermatitis". Again, regardless whether the inflammation is the body's response to an infection (disease) or to an allergy (disorder).

To bring more clarity into medicine, even though this is just about names for mere symptoms, it would help to reserve "Hot spot" for itchy inflammations only, but not all physicians do.

My reasoning is that most people associate with a "Hot spot" that the dog is licking and/or scratching the spot, making the spot hot and the inflammation worse: The dog licks and/or scratches because it itches.

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Conversely, most people seem to associate with "Dermatitis" *dry reddish sores or flaky patches*, or (later) *oozing, crusty, or scabby patches*, neither of which necessarily itch.

In fact, "Dermatitis" is commonly used as the name of the **visible symptom** only, while "Hot spot" is rather used as the name of a **behavioral symptom** too, as in "*the dog licks and scratches the spot all the time, now it looks hot, inflamed!*". Indeed.

Be aware that many skin conditions that go by the name "Hot spot" do *not* produce pus, thus they are *not* "Pyoderma", even though they may be **triggered** by *bacteria* just like Pyoderma.

Because of this lack of clarity even in naming mere **symptoms**, currently dog owners and physicians use the name "Hot spot" as long as they don't know (or don't care) why the skin is...
inflamed and they cannot describe how it looks. It is a "catch-all" term.

Now you see why at mygermanshepherd.org there is this rather detailed Dog Problem Consultation form: it ensures some degree of precision when dog owners seek help with their "dog problem". Because requests like these leave a LOT unanswered: "I need help! For a month already my dog has really bad hotspots on the belly!"

### Who Suffers Skin Infections

In general, any dog with a lesion can contract a Skin Infection. In general, because even with a lesion, healthy dogs rarely succumb to a Skin Infection since a healthy integumentary system's Langerhans cells can easily thwart off the everyday pathogens.

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Most times a lesion stems from accidental injury or from a dog fight. While Skin Infections following veterinary treatment are extremely rare in developed countries, thanks to protocols of hygiene.

Accidental injuries come down to abrasion from bushes etc, harsh coat care with sharp blade, rake, or teeth, or household or yard accidents.

The typical infection pathway of dogs that do not have a lesion from accidental injury or from a dog fight is:

- the dog lies down, may even roll around
- an irritant, or possibly an allergen, causes an itch somewhere on the dog's body
- the dog starts scratching, or at least feverishly licking
- the itch intensifies

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• the dog scratches ever more frequently
• the skin gets sore
• ruptures or micro-cracks arise in the epidermis
• parasites, bacteria, fungi, or more rarely viruses infiltrate the sebaceous glands at hair follicle shafts
• where the infiltrating pathogens trigger an infection.
• The body responds with an inflammation to alert all available mechanisms of the immune system to assemble and fight the pathogens.
• At this point the average physician responds with a symptom name for this infection and prescribes antibiotics and some anti-

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**inflammatory drugs** to mitigate the inflammation...

- ... such that you believe healing occurred and, quite pleased, you pay for drugs and consultation.

For now everyone is happy, until **spin-off symptoms** surface because **cure** is outstanding.

**Cure** is outstanding whenever:

a) you didn't use up all prescribed **antibiotics** (usually for 7 to 12 days) because the also prescribed **anti-inflammatory drugs** quickly relieved the **inflammation** and made you think "*it's already cured!*", or

b) the **infection** was **triggered** by **fungi** or other **pathogens** but **not** by bacteria: *if at all, antibiotics can only help with bacteria,* or

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c) the infection was indeed triggered by bacteria but these bacteria are resistant to the antibiotics: Note that against more than half of the major group of bacterial infections NO antibiotic is effective!

So then when spin-off symptoms surface:

- the average physician either tries a different antibiotic, and again you pay for drugs and consultation, and the above a... b... c... starts all over

- or the physician considers the new symptoms to be a new health issue, diagnoses it with another symptom name, and prescribes different drugs or just more of the same.

Of course still healing is outstanding. Commonly, the first indication of this is that the new symptoms are diagnosed as Digestive Disorder or Ear Infection.

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Digestive Disorders are a common spin-off because of what antibiotics do to the digestive system. Ear Infections are a common spin-off because antibiotics cause proliferation of yeast into other tissues, and the delicate outer ear and middle ear tissue is particularly sensitive to yeast.

As mentioned before, high skin pH too can trigger a Skin Infection. Dog skin is mostly alkaline anyway, and the average skin pH of German Shepherds is particularly alkaline (about ten times more alkaline than that of a Golden Retriever).

The more alkaline, the more attractive to bacteria and fungi, including the pathogenic strains that can trigger Skin Infections.

Be aware that many drugs impact on skin pH. The changes in skin pH can then cause new strains of bacteria to settle on the skin that may briefly challenge the immunological defense mechanism of the integumentary system.

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If at that time the immunological response:

- is weakened, say due to severe illness, or
- is paralyzed from the use of anti-inflammatory drugs, or
- is busy fighting other attacks, say from vaccines(!)

then the organism may be unable to prevent an infection.

Other than all the above, generally the more humid and warm the living space of the dog, the more likely a Skin Infection. This is because both bacteria and fungi thrive in humid warm environments.

Be aware that when the dog has a chance to lick the infected tissue, the dog will even ingest the pathogens. And scratching the infected tissue, and then other body parts, will spread the
pathogens all across the body! Both makes the whole situation much worse.

**Warning Signs**

- reddish spots
- often quite circular
- often uneven skin
- receding fur
- possibly swelling
- often itchy
- often odor
- possibly pus or other discharge
- increasing in size and/or spreading out elsewhere

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if any marks then rather blackish dots than whitish dots

possibly visibility of parasites (eg mites, fleas, ticks, worms)

and behavioral signs of an infection:

- reduced appetite
- lethargy
- general malaise
- possibly even fever

Preventing Skin Infections

As always, the key to prevention is to nurture all body systems, not to intoxicate the body's cells:
• many *needless* yet nonetheless *harmful vaccinations* that *perturb and weaken* all immunological defense mechanisms

• *steroidal and non-steroidal drugs*

• *antibiotics* and many other types of lab medicaments

• *toxic waste products* from *rendering plants* attractively packaged in large colorful plastic bags or less so in tins labeled "dog food"

• insecticides, for example in *tick and flea spot-ons*

• pesticides in yard care products

• *allergens* and carcinogens in many plastic toys, plastic bowls, cleaning detergents, carpet adhesives etc

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• superfluous radiation, whether from X-rays or therapy

We nurture all body systems by providing only REAL natural foods and water.

It is that easy, indeed.

Other than that, GSDs have a particularly thin skin, and so regular coat care and gentle skin care will help as well:

• coat care

• skin care: bath or shower?

Oh! I can now add an update on this: While I continue to suggest to rinse your dog off after salt water contact whenever you can, I observed now that IF the dog is kept healthy then rinsing off is not required for healthy dog skin:

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Currently with Miguel I have the chance to go swimming in the ocean every day (because we now live in a tiny house on wheels, yes, and so for the last half year we have been parking the truck house right next to a beach). We have no way to rinse off here (unless we catch an active irrigation system, which is rare).

In short: Miguel has no dry skin nor any other skin issue. No Skin Infection, no allergy, nothing. Despite a LOT of salt water contact and a lack of rinsing off, his skin is entirely healthy.

So, IF the dog is kept healthy then rinsing off is not required. Indeed, Miguel is kept very healthy, after all I teach that topic.

Well, one correction: With this dog I wasn't able to stick to consistent meal times and related points, and so promptly he did develop a habit of scavenging as expected. With consistent meal

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times it is so much easier to stop scavenging for good.

As for coat care, I brush him every single day with a Furminator type of tool from the UK, else we would drown in lose hair in this tiny truck house! Whenever the house inside will be done and upon unpacking the boxes I find the Love glove, I will polish him off with that again, like before. I also found that the Love glove is the only effective remedy to gently get loose hair off his legs. So yeah, we love the love glove.

Further tips how to prevent Skin Infections relate to stress and boredom:

- A stressed dog is likely to scratch a LOT more, and at some point so much that the skin gets sore, up to and including a lesion. Both can trigger a Skin Infection. The key factor to prevent stress for the dog is the #1 Secret about Dogs.
A bored dog too is likely to *scratch* a LOT more. The key factor to prevent boredom is to integrate the dog into our lifestyle as much as possible, and when we cannot, to provide *safe* toys: Top 6 Toys that German Shepherds Love.

I even took Miguel with me when I was working in a cafe! I "sold" the idea as "protection" for both cafe and customers. I leashed him outside the entrance to a bench. Somewhere on the website is a photo.

Be imaginative to accommodate your dog's needs.

Since both stress and boredom find relief with plenty of varied exercise, a good exercise regime helps to prevent even Skin Infections too.

Finally, keep in mind that if your floors are tile or hardwood, and all the more if they are carpet, *floors* (obviously) quickly accumulate pathogens.

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that may **trigger** Skin Infections when excessive scratching leads to micro lesions and we have *not* kept all body systems *healthy* for a proper defense.

This is why we were always using a **steam-cleaner**: They keep floors hygienic (pathogen-free) without any chemicals! Sounds too good to be true, I know. And yet it is: The hot steam kills every living thing (microbes!) but leaves *even carpet fibers* intact if used right (short intervals, repeated).

**Treating Skin Infections**

As always, the **key to treatment** is to treat the **cause**, not the **symptoms**.

You saw at the start of this chapter that the **cause** of Skin Infections comes down to an impaired immunological defense of the **integumentary**
system (Langerhans cells). Naturally, such impairment occurs when we don't nurture the body's cells, or worse, intoxicate them:

1. poor diet
2. administration of immunosuppressants or antibiotics, whether purposefully as medicaments or unnoticed in meat and dairy
3. needless and yet harmful vaccination "boosters"

You see that it always leads back to the same principles, and it's clear why it has to:

- After all an organism needs the right fuel to function!
- Like a car engine needs the right fuel to function.

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Regardless whether that fuel is petrol, gas, diesel, electricity, or here: REAL natural foods. Fuel must always match the construction parameters of the engine. Evolution constructed neither people nor dogs to function on processed waste products, plastics, medicines, etc.

Maybe one day we substitute natural evolution and create dogs that permanently function well on that, but for now, no way! Drug prescriptions, veterinarian treatment protocols, total dog health cost, and dog lifespan, all are proof.

Only after we've made sure that we nurture all body systems and avoid all intoxication, we consider and address the less likely triggers:

- Environmental irritants: Is there anything in household or yard that may irritate the dog's skin, cause itching, and so the dog scratches a lot?

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• Skin pH: Did the dog receive drugs that may have changed skin pH, inviting unusual pathogens to occupy the skin?

• Parasites: Can we see a mites infestation, or fleas?

If so, we eliminate the environmental irritant (replace it with a more natural product). We stop using the drug (likely without replacement). We keep the dog and the environment clean (and maybe use a mite or flea remedy).

Here it becomes clear why the first step has to be the change of diet such that we nurture the dog's cells well: The healthier the dog, the less likely the dog will at all be affected by environmental irritants, by necessary and sensible drugs, by mites or fleas.

Every organism (person and dog) can deal quite well with a one-time infringement of the.
The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

**Foundation of Health.** Just not with *frequent infringements* (repeated vaccinations, rounds of drug treatment, daily dog food).

A **strong antiseptic spray**, applied to the infected skin tissue three to nine times a day, and where required **hard-bandage** to prevent further injury from scratching (particularly at night), measures like these surely will get most pathogens under control, but what happens then, what happens going forward?

We really must treat the **cause** in order to achieve **healing** and prevent recurrence!

Experience shows that dog owners who do anything less or different, generally complain soon thereafter that they "*can't get rid of the skin infection*", or that "*it's always coming back*" - both of which costs them a lot of nerves and money for ongoing consultations and ongoing treatments.

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Finally, I don't want to forget to mention an important part of the treatment of infections (diseases), like here Skin Infection, as opposed to the treatment of allergies (disorders).

With any infection it is essential that we take care not to help the spread of pathogens: Don't touch the infected area with your bare hands, use those disposable latex gloves, and still avoid touching the area.

Either way, wash your hands thoroughly *before and after* treatment, using an antiseptic lotion on your hands too.

Also remember here my note on home treatment.

Brief sun exposure is *good* for Skin Infections, just not prolonged exposure. In fact, with a Skin Infection we must not extend sun exposure by applying a sun block to the lightly haired body areas (ear pinna, nose top).

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Don't let your dog swim anywhere for at least *a week after* the Skin Infection has disappeared completely. Don't bathe your dog either during this time. *Showering the dog* is good though because of the cleansing effect of clean running water.

Don't forget that if you used the strong antiseptic *wound spray* or *Vet's Best Hot Spot Spray* then it must be *re-applied* after showering.

**Conclusion**

If you follow the treatment of Skin Infections laid out here, and in this order, then you will achieve permanent *cure*, and *overall* improved health. This is a world of a difference to the *palliation or suppression* of *symptoms* that you pay for when you visit the average *allopathic physician*.

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Hypothyroidism

Note that there are many immune system disorders, but Hypothyroidism isn't really one of them. Hypothyroidism actually is a hormonal disorder, thus an endocrine system disorder. We get to the role of the immune system in just a moment.

True examples of Immune System Disorders are Allergies, Arthritis, Cancer, and Diabetes. The first three of these are very common in the German Shepherd Dog breed as well. All are discussed under the respective links. So let's focus on Hypothyroidism here.

Hypothyroidism is characterized by an underproduction of the thyroid. Some argue that Hypothyroidism is hereditary but as of writing the gene defect has not been identified. Either way,

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Hypothyroidism clearly requires a trigger before this hormonal disorder actually shows.

Some believe that the trigger is an immune system disorder (here it is now), such that the immune system erroneously attacks the thyroid. If so, then that immune system disorder too is acquired:

- caused by errors made with vaccination
- caused by errors made with radiation (most commonly x-raying young puppies where bone marrow still grows)
- caused by a chemical substance (typically in medicaments, more rarely in cleaning agents)
- caused by a pathogen (rare).

The thyroid controls the speed of metabolism, so dogs with low thyroid levels have a slower metabolic rate. Hence if they continue to get the
same amount of food and exercise, they will get fat and soon suffer from Obesity too.

Who Suffers Hypothyroidism

German Shepherds show a higher incidence of Hypothyroidism than many other dog breeds. Hypothyroidism often shows up between age 2 to 5 years, thus rather early in the dog's life. Gender seems to play no role.

Warning Signs

The symptoms of Hypothyroidism vary a lot, subject to the dog's individual circumstances:

- unusual changes in behavior, in particular nervousness and possibly sudden aggression
- weight gain without significant change in diet and exercise

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• skin problems
• hair loss or hair thinning
• seeking warmth
• avoiding exercise
• little stamina
• inadequate level of thyroid hormones in the blood

The first symptom is caused by the fact that the endocrine system not only controls growth and metabolism but also the response to external stimuli like for example flight-or-fight, and so an endocrine system disorder can lead the dog to distorted judgement and reaction in everyday situations.

The last symptom is how Hypothyroidism is generally confirmed with a blood test.

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Preventing Hypothyroidism

If Hypothyroidism has a hereditary cause (a gene defect) then the surefire way to prevent Hypothyroidism obviously is to exclude dogs known to have a thyroid dysfunction from breeding ventures.

The problem here is that even "professional" breeders don't pay for all available blood tests to rule out genetic defects. Breeders ponder that their paying customers "likely won't realize the dog has defects until many years later" - and then it's too late to claim a "refund".

If Hypothyroidism is not hereditary then clearly the surefire way to prevent Hypothyroidism is to prevent immune system disorders from:

- over-vaccination ("boosters")
• vaccination combinations (cocktails like DHLPPCv or a subset of it)

• vaccination when sick (the dog must have been healthy for at least a month!)

• too early vaccination (at a time where puppies still have effective maternal antibodies that block the vaccine, typically 3 to 4 months)

• needless vaccinations, given the dog's living environment and lifestyle

• administration of antibiotics

• administration of steroids or NSAIDs

• needless X-rays, and in particular X-rays of a puppy

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• carcinogenic dog "food" - *all industrial kibble and tin "food" is carcinogenic* because of how it is manufactured.

Of this rather long list, *steroids* destroy the immune system *fastest* (instantly, and for at least 4 months after the last dose of steroids *as our Top immunologist explains here*), while *carcinogenic dog "food"* destroys the immune system most reliably - because the poor dog has to eat and accumulate the toxins every day.

**Treating Hypothyroidism**

Once diagnosed through an inexpensive blood test that measures the level of thyroid hormones in the blood, standard treatment is simple and individually fairly inexpensive too.

However, the diagnosis itself is critically difficult: Overdiagnosis of Hypothyroidism is very common.
because various other disorders and even some diseases can mimic Hypothyroidism and give ordinary vets the false impression that Hypothyroidism is present.

False diagnosis is all the more likely for German Shepherds and other breeds with higher metabolic rates since these dogs typically have significantly lower thyroid hormone concentrations (to keep the higher metabolism in check).

Even many medications falsely indicate Hypothyroidism as they affect thyroid levels in the blood, in particular steroids like glucocorticoids, phenobarbital, sulfonamides, clomipramine, and painkillers like aspirin.

The diagnosis therefore should be commissioned in an animal hospital, not with an ordinary practice veterinarian.

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IF the hospital's diagnosis is positive (meaning the dog suffers Hypothyroidism), the standard treatment is to prescribe medication that makes up for insufficient levels of the thyroid hormones in question.

This replacement therapy is generally necessary for the remainder of the animal's life, thus the costs do add up significantly over time - unless the dog dies early from one of the "side effects" of this treatment.

Why "side effects"?

Because the standard treatment impacts on the entire endocrine system, and in healthy dogs the endocrine system is so fine-tuned that it cannot be replicated in Hypothyroidism dogs. Inadequate hormone levels in the blood (too high, too low, mismatch) always cause "side effects" so severe they must be considered the main effect.

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This is why throughout treatment the dog must be closely monitored with regular blood tests to ensure that the administration of one hormone (compound), normally Thyroxine (T<sub>4</sub>), does not result in an overall hormone mismatch that harms the dog more than it benefits the dog.

If the animal hospital's diagnosis and tailoring of treatment is correct, the dog's behavior will typically normalize within a week or two, skin and coat condition will improve within four to eight weeks, and body weight will reverse within eight weeks or more.

Important to consider is that not only will the treatment cost accrue over the dog's entire life, also treatment tailoring has to be reassessed annually because thyroid hormone composition changes with age, just like in healthy dogs too.

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Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a *chronic* nervous system disorder showing as recurring seizures.

Seizures are described as an uncoordinated firing of the neurons, usually within a portion of the brain called the cerebrum, that leads to uncontrolled muscle contractions and so to involuntary lack of body control. Either visible (limb muscles) or invisible (internal muscles) or both.

For a particular dog, seizure symptoms are generally the same over several years.

Epilepsy can have one of several and very different *causes*, and *one* is enough:

- In some dogs and people Epilepsy is caused by an *acquired defect*, for example an injury
like head trauma, misdevelopment following poor prenatal nutrition or oxygen deficiencies.

- In other dogs and people Epilepsy is caused by a disease, for example meningitis, AIDS, or viral encephalitis.

- Again in other dogs and people Epilepsy is caused by another disorder, for example stroke and other cardiovascular system disorders, psychological disturbances like extreme anxiety, or disorders resulting from the administration of certain medicaments, particularly those that affect neurotransmitters, like steroids and NSAIDs do.

Here you have yet another reason why I warn of using steroids or NSAIDs in seemingly every article and every book I have ever published.

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And if you don't like *me* looking after your health and your dog's health(?) then hopefully you take heed of all the health advice that our Top *immunologist* gives you with the respective Dog Expert Interview and Review. Because *so much* health and money is being wasted for the fact that patients allow treatments that *cause* more disorders!

This maximum variety of causes of Epilepsy leaves many ordinary physicians to waive further thought and they just conclude "*the cause of Epilepsy is unknown*". While it is actually *natural* and thus quite common that a *nervous system disorder* can be caused by either of all three: Defect, Disease, or another Disorder.

Not seeing this, some physicians even use the excuse argument "*it's genetic*, ie an *inherited defect*. But note that a genetic cause is highly unlikely:

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1. As you've just learned, there are plenty of known causes of Epilepsy (defect and disease and disorder), none of which has anything to do with genetics.

2. Only some puppies of an epileptic parent dog suffer from seizures, while other puppies are fine all their life.

3. Epilepsy shows only later in life, neither immediately from birth nor in line with biological transitions.

4. A specific gene defect has still not been found.

The last point may surprise those who have come across some studies that argue that "many Epilepsy genes have been found". As so often, I suspect that what those researchers found is coincidence, not correlation.

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A genuine inherited defect is not caused by a slew of gene abnormalities but by one, the others are either triggers or coincidence. As of today no gene has been identified that causes Epilepsy in every dog, or in every person for that matter. And only that would make it an inherited defect.

**Who Suffers Epilepsy**

So how comes, you may wonder, that some studies argue they found that German Shepherds, Boxers, Golden Retrievers, Labradors, Collies, Cocker Spaniels etc seem to be genetically predisposed to Epilepsy?

Well, *all of these* breeds have very high populations as compared to other breeds for which no higher incidence of Epilepsy has been found. This alone strongly suggests that those "research results" are statistical errors. For

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example, 10 Epilepsy cases in a population of 800 German Shepherds makes this breed no more "genetically predisposed to Epilepsy" than just 1 case in a population of 80 Leonbergers.

The only other explanation for this oddity would be that breeds with large populations suffer even more from inbreeding practices and that those inbreeding practices somehow cause a genetic Epilepsy defect.

Because of the nature of Epilepsy, the nature of seizures, Epilepsy clearly is an acquired nervous system disorder:

The nature of a seizure is a chronic temporary mismatch of electrical impulses that run through the network of nerve cells and sensory receptors to sense and control the entire body. A temporary mismatch of electrical impulses can only be acquired.

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While before birth the unborn puppies are biologically protected from accumulating too much toxins even if the mother dog is sick, soon after birth most puppies have to EAT the plastics and other cell toxins that make up kibble & co.

Plus, most puppies are subjected to vaccination cocktails, and from an unresponsibly early age, and then they are further intoxicated with unneccessary and harmful "boosters" every year thereafter.

The term "the dog is current on all vaccinations" is a crime to uninformed dog owners. A crime because two things are stolen:

1. the money for the harmful vaccination "boosters", and

2. the dog's health!

In addition, from as early as puppy age most dogs are subjected to extremely powerful 

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medicaments like corticosteroids and glucocorticoids and NSAIDs.

All of these causes above drastically harm the immune system, the cardiovascular system, the endocrine system, the nervous system and other body systems.

So then the body shows it is sick: Some dogs and puppies show sickness symptoms such as Skin Allergies, others show sickness symptoms like Arthritis, or Hypothyroidism, or Cancer. And in all sick dogs the sickness symptoms become more plentiful over time. And so does the cost of treating all those symptoms!

Soon after birth, the accumulation of all these cell toxins then cause bouts of mismatched electrical impulses, and that's what seizures are. And this is why Epilepsy symptoms only very rarely (in the sickest of sick dogs) start to show before age 6 months.

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It is the body's warning sign that it cannot cope with that much intoxication. Seizures are "just" another symptom of a sickened dog or person, like Skin Allergies for example are nothing but a symptom of sickness too.

The nature of seizures aside, note that I have not seen nor heard of a dog that was raised healthy like we raise a puppy but that suffered from Epilepsy, or from Arthritis, or Diabetes, or Cancer, or bouts of Allergies. It is always the dogs that get intoxicated lifelong by the "pet food" industry and by allopathic veterinarians.

Food for thought, isn't it?

**Warning Signs**

- restlessness

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• disoriented or uncoordinated wandering or pacing
• salivating
• whining
• hiding
• seeking affection
• gazing
• head shaking
• incontinence
• running in circles
• sudden strong nervousness
• tripping or tumbling
• collapsing

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• sudden respiratory distress
• sudden fast heart rate or heart arrhythmia
• violent limb or body convulsions
• loss of awareness
• loss of consciousness

So, seizure symptoms are not always as evident as *uncontrolled limb muscle contractions* that make the dog or person shake part of the body. Seizure symptoms can be very subtle. Indeed, seizure symptoms may be *inside* the body only.

Note that the movement of body parts that you see or feel is *insignificant* compared to all the micro-movements that the muscles, tendons, and ligaments perform unnoticeable *inside* the body.

The *chronic temporary mismatch of electrical impulses* through the neurons - that is a seizure -

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can affect *any or many* of all of these muscles. Hence why some Epilepsy symptoms are subtle or unnoticeable.

Some physicians distinguish three different phases of a seizure:

- Pre-seizure phase, or aura
- Ictus, the seizure itself
- Post-ictal phase

However, there are no distinct set points that would mark the beginning or the end of one "phase" over the other.

The total time that a seizure lasts may vary as much as the symptoms. It may be all over within a couple of minutes (the symptoms that you observe), or it may last for half an hour and even longer.

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Preventing Epilepsy

As Epilepsy is *not* an inherited defect but an *acquired disorder*, Epilepsy can be prevented like you prevent other nervous system disorders:

1. No intoxication of cells, particularly not nerve toxins like they are in *melted plastics that are in industrial pet "food"*. So, never feed industrial pet "food", no matter how tempting the marketing.

2. Avoid much carbohydrates in the diet. Carbohydrates are *not* needed to thrive, neither for dogs nor for people. Today we know that carbohydrate-rich diets cause inflammation in the *cardiovascular system*. Frequent inflammation in the cardiovascular system then *causes* or at least *triggers* *Diabetes*, Epilepsy, and other disorders!

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3. No disruption of neurotransmitters, particularly not steroids (corticosteroids, glucocorticoids, etc) and NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). So, do not accept what ordinary allopathic vets routinely prescribe. If you want to pay for that, alright, but don't give it to your dog.

4. Avoid environmental intoxication, particularly from floor cleaning detergents, carpet adhesives, wood stains, and yard pesticides.

5. Avoid the highly toxic yet very popular flea and tick spot ons, particularly those with insecticides that have a long residual effect in the bloodstream. All details here and in the Periodical linked there at the end.

6. Safeguard your dog from injuries, here particularly those to the head (falls, dog

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fights, traffic accidents etc) or to the spinal cord (high jumps, tail pulling, x-rays etc).

Conversely, those physicians who use the excuse argument "it's genetic" - and thus all the other factors I mentioned would be triggers, not the cause - they advise that Epilepsy can be prevented by excluding from breeding the dogs that have suffered seizures.

Why is this wrong?

Because you saw in the second point in the first list above that IF a gene defect has relevance at all, it clearly is recessive, and the symptom of Epilepsy (namely seizures) may not show until the dog is well beyond mating age.

Thus the correct advice in that extremely remote case of Epilepsy being an inherited defect would be not to breed any dog that hasn't been cleared for the (then known) gene defect.

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Treating Epilepsy

When you notice symptoms that make you suspect that your dog has a seizure, the first thing to remember is to **stay calm** - even if the symptoms shock or scare you, like violent limb or body convulsions, respiratory distress, loss of awareness, or loss of consciousness.

Convulsions and respiratory distress are probably the most scary moments to witness for any dog owner.

The second point to remember is to **safeguard the dog** when the symptom suggests the dog might get hurt, as is the case with symptoms like tripping or tumbling, collapsing, or violent limb or body convulsions.

Safeguarding may mean you have to find something soft to **support the dog**, say with a

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couch pillow, or with the thick Westpaw nap mat, or with your arm or other body parts.

Or, safeguarding may mean you have to restrain the dog, say with a rope, or with the leash, or with your arm or other body parts.

Or, safeguarding may mean you have to rapidly relocate the dog, say retrieving the dog from the water(!), or from a road, or from too small an enclosure like for example a kennel, or from an escalator.

Seeing a dog with convulsions and respiratory distress while in the water is so shocking you might feint, so better mentally prepare now: Practice the first point above. Stay calm. Regardless what happens.

The third point to remember is to assess the situation - for this the points one and two were the prerequisites. Think, do the symptoms, in the

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dog's present whereabouts, raise urgency to call an ambulance, or to call your veterinarian, or to take the dog to an animal hospital or to the nearest veterinarian?

The first seizure is the hardest. Both for the dog and for you. Not that subsequent seizures will be any easier, but the first one is the big unknown, and it forces you to develop a routine to react to something that you don't want to become a routine.

After the first seizure, your action during most seizures should amount to no more than moving away all objects from your dog, so that your dog cannot injure himself/herself.

If you can't resist the desire to comfort your dog during the possibly terrifying minutes, you may hold the dog in a way that gives comfort not fear. This is very hard to manage during a seizure, therefore the general rule is that it is best to

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leave the dog alone during a seizure, alone in the sense that you are sitting a few steps away.

Ideally, don't talk when your dog has a seizure. This helps yourself to concentrate, to remember all steps, and to develop a supportive routine, and it helps your dog to get faster past the seizure (the post-ictal phase). So save the talking for well after the seizure, only then it can be felt as supportive.

The fourth point to remember is to time and take note how long the seizure lasts and what symptoms you notice. This timing is not impaired by points 1 to 3 because the first three points will not take up time when a seizure strikes.

Note down the start time, the symptoms you see, and the end time. If you can, also note down the dog's behavior and the situation just before you noticed the seizure symptoms, and certainly the

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dog's behavior (that's enough here) after you noticed the end of the seizure.

You will get used to always be prepared to take notes when you have an epileptic dog.

Your observations and notes may come very handy when at some point you find a quality veterinarian, because a quality veterinarian will then be able to more precisely assess the type, the severity, and the cause of your dog's Epilepsy, as well as the best treatment particularly for your dog.

If a seizure takes longer than 20 minutes or if the dog has not fully recovered within 60 minutes after a seizure, contact a quality veterinarian and follow their directions.

Conversely, ordinary allopathic vets will routinely prescribe drug treatment for Epilepsy, eg Phenobarbital, Diazepam, or Bromide, and these
drugs have severe and long-term side effects (the worst being Bromide).

Therefore, do not outright accept (and pay for) anything your vet aims to prescribe. Be fully aware that whatever medicament the vet prescribes, it can only lessen the symptoms of Epilepsy (reduce the frequency and/or severity of seizures) if at all, and while it does so it causes new/other symptoms and further disorders!

Understandably, ordinary vets (and MDs alike) always end up prescribing medicaments to suppress seizures. After all, this is how they make income. But the much more promising treatment of Epilepsy is to seek cure outright. You cannot do both, suppressing symptoms and yet finding cure, because a disorder can only be cured when you don't suppress any of its symptoms.

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When you seek cure outright, instead of medicaments you will focus on the following treatment:

1. **Avoid all stress for the dog** because stress is the key *trigger* of nervous system disorders like Epilepsy:
   a) avoid a [Pack conflict for the dog](#)
   b) avoid [Separation Anxiety](#), and
   c) avoid fear (of other dogs, other people, cars, etc).

2. **Avoid intoxicating the dog** because cell toxins cause *and* exacerbate nervous system disorders:
   a) **don't feed kibble or tin food or treats** *regardless* if the label claims "wholly natural" because industrial pet "food" is *always toxic*
   b) don't allow any **needless vaccination** and never a foolish "booster", *unless* a prior titer

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shows *no* reaction at all (the chemical adjuvants in vaccines are in fact cell toxins)
c) make sure you avoid environmental intoxication for the dog, most common in floor cleaning detergents, carpet adhesives, wood stains, and yard pesticides.

3. Instead, provide only **natural "homemade" foods and treats** because these provide optimal nutrition to nerve cells, without any of the harmful additives that are in processed and packaged foods.

4. Avoid much carbohydrates in the diet. Carbohydrates are *not* needed to thrive, neither for dogs nor for people. Today we know that carbohydrate-rich diets cause inflammation in the **cardiovascular system**. Frequent inflammation in the cardiovascular system then *causes* or at least *triggers** Diabetes, Epilepsy, and other disorders!

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5. Keep your dog occupied as much as possible, avoid boredom: varied exercise, hiking, playtime, games, and toys. As you will know from yourself, when you are active (without amounting to stress) your nerves feel fine, they get just the right amount of stimuli.

Once you truly pursue this Epilepsy treatment regime, not only will you cure Epilepsy but in addition you will prevent or cure other disorders too: Allergies, Arthritis, and Cancer, to name just the most common ones.

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Skin Allergy

Skin Allergy is an acquired disorder describing the condition of an allergen triggering an inflammation because the immune system responds to the allergen as if it was a pathogen.

Meaning, there is not really a pathogen, and so no infection and no disease. But note that there must be an allergen, else it is no allergy. Many physicians diagnose an "allergy" but neither find nor care to find the allergen!

To understand allergies, let's briefly look into this. MUCH SIMPLIFIED, in terms of an allergy a healthy immune system works like this:

- Bone marrow produces 16 types of white blood cells (leukocytes), one of which are eosinophils.
• These eosinophils (and many other leukocytes) patrol the body via the cardiovascular system.

• When they encounter a foreign substance, the eosinophils leak from the bloodstream into the tissues surrounding the site of encounter.

• There they "drop bombs" subject to how harmful the foreign substance appears to be: they deposit granules of cytokines, chemokines, and even cytotoxic proteins that irritate, modify, or destroy the foreign substance and surrounding own tissue that already appears harmed.

• The many wounded on this "battlefield" (remember "bombs") show as the symptom inflammation.

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The reason why for this MUCH SIMPLIFIED immune system process description I mention eosinophils (and not one of the many other leukocytes, macrophages, dendritic cells, or indeed the many beneficial bacteria that also help the immune system!) is that eosinophils are the key immunological response in an allergy (so is the present medical understanding).

Now, when these eosinophils encounter an allergen, they drop "bigger bombs" (more harmful protein granules) than this same allergen warrants in other organisms: they treat the allergen as if it was a disease-causing pathogen.

So the question is: Why does the immune system treat the allergen like a pathogen, what may cause this apparent "over-reaction"?

I put over-reaction in quotation marks because clearly from the point of view of the immune

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system itself it is not "over-reacting" at all, only from the outside view of allopathic medicine.

As you learned from the interactions between all body systems, the immune system permanently communicates with all the other body systems (directly or indirectly). It knows - much better than any physician could ever know(!) - that in some way the organism already is sick.

Therefore it aims to keep any potential further harm at bay! It drops "bigger bombs" (more harmful protein granules) than the allergen would warrant in a healthy organism.

In other words, the immune system does not "over-react" here, it just naturally reacts more than it would if the organism were healthy to start with!

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Or what do you do when you look after someone you know is sick? You keep any potential further harm at bay! Right?

And you don't consider that an "over-reaction", you consider that common sense. Because you know that a sick person (say your child) is at particular risk of further harm at that time.

And so this is my answer what causes allergy symptoms: earlier harm done. And in the particular case of an allergy almost certainly the cause is vaccination while sick.

Vaccination protocol, and even every vaccine leaflet, explicitely prohibits this because at a time when the immune system deals with sickness it gets critically shocked the moment the vaccine is injected directly into the bloodstream.

Interestingly, shock results in confusion, and often memory loss too. You see there are more

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types of shock than they list here, and there are more causes of confusion than they list here, and memory loss is not limited to the mind, in fact fundamentally it is on a molecular level anyway.

The confusion is maxed out when a vaccine combination is administered. Now the immune system is totally lost as to how to react, and it may no longer be able to react right going forward: it got harmed long-term.

And yet both is common practice:

- most dogs see the vet because of some sickness
- the vet rightfully fears the owner will not come back when the dog is fine
- and so despite being treated for some sickness, the dog also is vaccinated!

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And to max out the vet's chances, the vet administers a *vaccine combination*, often even the *six-pack DHLPPCv*!

Again, this is *my* answer. As said, in *mainstream medicine* the answer is: "*In an allergy the immune system is over-reacting, and steroids are the right solution to suppress this over-reaction.*"

You may choose to agree with what mainstream *allopathic physicians* say, and prescribe, and make you pay. I won't hold a grudge.

Just be aware of the consequences: When you allow - and pay for - the *standard treatment* of an *allergy* (namely *steroids and/or NSAIDs*), you *add* to the body more of what makes the body's cells sick! And my *Foundation of Health* clearly states:

*"When you add something that healthy cells don't like, you make some healthy cells sick."*

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So now when you add more steroids and/or NSAIDs, you make even more cells sick! In my point of view, medical treatment could not be more misguided.

But I admit, the way it's done it makes the most money for physicians and pharma industry. And indeed, individual medical history of treated dogs (and people!) shows: Patients treated with anti-inflammatories always come back for the treatment of further health issues.

So even if you choose to disagree with my explanation of the cause of allergies, isn't it striking how well all this fits together? In science this strongly suggests it is correct.

Obviously another cause of allergies is steroid treatment itself: As the linked word explains in more detail, both steroids and NSAIDs always have anti-inflammatory properties, they drastically impair the immune system, or shut it down.

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completely. Even months after the end of treatment!

Thus if you pay for any steroid treatment, you may also acquire allergies, but that won't be your only problem. Same for your dog.

**Who Suffers Skin Allergies**

In general, dogs are just as susceptible to allergies as people. Only that allergies in people primarily show in a runny nose, coughing, and sore eyes, while allergies in dogs primarily show in the skin.

Hence why it makes sense to label this chapter Skin Allergy. Dog food allergies too show in the skin. So do drug allergies.

While any dog can develop a Skin Allergy, they primarily affect dogs that have to eat industrial dog "food" (kibble or tin food). Across all

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disorders, feeding waste clearly is the most common cause because the cell toxins the waste comprises accumulate in all body cells on a daily basis.

For the particular disorder Skin Allergy however I would argue that vaccination when sick is the more common cause, because most dogs are subjected to an array of vaccinations already at puppy age, when dog food hasn't had long-term impact yet.

Finally, lightly short-haired German Shepherds and those with no undercoat may be more susceptible to skin contact allergies from floor cleaners, carpet binders, wood stains, yard pesticides, flea bites, etc.

Because less hair means that any allergen can more readily come into contact with the skin. Any harm done to the integumentary system or the

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immune system may then cause allergy symptoms.

**Warning Signs**

- patches of irritated reddish skin
- within days in *several* locations
- possibly *slight* swelling (if severe swelling it's either from an *infection* or from prolonged scratching/biting)
- possibly hair loss
- dog scratches, bites, or licks the skin more *habitually* than aggressively* 
- *possibly* frequent sneezing or coughing, or rubbing the eyes

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any sign of *symmetry* of symptoms on the skin

but *not* the signs of an infection:

- no pus or other discharge
- no odor
- no puncture wounds
- no lesion (except if from scratching/biting)
- if any marks then rather whitish dots than blackish dots
- no visibility of parasites (eg mites, fleas, ticks, worms)

* Note that the dog will scratch, bite, or lick the skin more *habitually* than aggressively, because *disorders* including *allergies* rather cause

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discomfort, while infections (diseases) rather cause pain.

Behavioral symptoms like this are very helpful for correct diagnosis, but rarely enquired by the average veterinarian.

Preventing Skin Allergies

If you've come through this chapter from the beginning, you already know how to prevent a life plagued by allergies and their associated treatment cost, and discomfort for the dog or indeed yourself:

1. Avoid all unnecessary* vaccinations and "boosters"

   a) particularly when the dog has, or has had any sickness in the past 6 weeks!

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THINK: the dog survived that \textit{without} vaccination, why rush \textit{now}??

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{b)} particularly \textit{vaccine combinations}
  \item \textit{c)} particularly when the puppy is not even 4 months old, and no \textit{titer} has been done
\end{itemize}

2. Avoid \textit{all} \textit{steroids and NSAIDs}

3. Avoid \textit{antibiotics}, \textit{unless} these stringent criteria are met

4. Avoid \textit{all} \textit{industrial "dog food" and "treats"}, only \textit{feed REAL natural foods}.

* \textbf{Avoid all \textit{unnecessary} vaccinations:}

1. Dogs (and people) acquire \textit{natural immunity} day by day, even against life-threatening \textit{diseases}, else neither dogs nor people

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would exist: they and we survive a plethora of pathogenic attacks every single day, because we *naturally* acquire immunity by being exposed to *naturally limited amounts* of all *pathogens*.

2. This *natural immunity* is *general and complete*, it trains *all* immunological defense mechanisms. Conversely, *vaccination* provides only *selective and incomplete* immunization, it reaches only *one* immunological defense mechanism, and *only* for the *pathogen* in the vaccine. Which is why *all* defense mechanisms get *weaker through vaccination*. Lack of practice, lack of training!

3. A few pathogenic attacks are so sophisticated or so numerous that they *defeat* the *immune system* at times when the immune system has been weakened too.

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much. Only these life-threatening diseases warrant vaccination, all others provide the necessary training for the immune system!

4. Life-threatening for dogs are only *Parvo* and *Distemper*.

5. If a disease is not prevalent in the dog's living environment, vaccination does nothing but *harm*.

6. If the dog's lifestyle does not expose the dog to a pathogen that *is prevalent*, vaccination does nothing but *harm*. Example, a dog that doesn't get to roam around is *not* exposed to the pathogen even *if* it is prevalent in the dog's living environment.

7. The act of "*having vaccinated*" must not make us wrongly believe that "*now no care need to be taken*", because vaccine

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immunization is not always effective, and the Foundation of Health always applies.

All details in Dog Vaccinations and Puppy Vaccinations.

As for the last point (4) in the penultimate list, "only feed REAL natural foods", most of today's dog owners struggle to remember how dogs have been fed before the 1950ies: Throughout history domesticated dogs survived and thrived on nothing but REAL food leftovers, "table scraps" if you want.

While today's processed "foods", and worse, the processed waste products of processed "foods", comprise so many cell toxins that the Foundation of Health is being violated not just yearly upon vet visits, but daily with every meal.

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So of course dogs get sick, and of course they get disorders too, including allergies (this chapter) and cancer. No surprise here.

And yet, most of today's dog owners struggle to "find the time" to make REAL foods for their family, and so share them with their dog too. Although historically most people worked 16 hours a day, 6 days a week. While today, well, most people work far less, and yet surprisingly now they "don't find the time".

So to make eating and feeding REAL foods as easy and quick and affordable for you as I make it for myself, I have summarized a LOT of leading tips under Daily Dog Meal Suggestions and further pages in the menu: Care > Dog Food.

To prevent skin contact allergies, make sure:

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1. that the dog gets an **effective flea, tick, and mosquito remedy as needed** for the living environment and individual lifestyle

2. that the dog does not get exposed to **allergens** in chemicals that end up on the coat, on the skin, or on the paw pads (floor cleaning detergents, yard care products, etc)

3. and that when you wash the dog, use **products specifically for dogs**, like for example **Zymox Enzymatic Shampoo** because **dog skin is different from human skin**. More dog-suitable remedies under **Dog Care** and **Dog Health**.

To **prevent inhalant allergies** (rare in dogs):

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1. keep your dog away from pollen, hay, smoke, etc where possible

2. keep your home fairly dust-free and well aired

3. do NOT use room "refreshers", many of the aerosols are allergenic to both people and dogs! Just open the windows.

Treating Skin Allergies

If prevention came too late and your dog is suspected to have a Skin Allergy, not a Skin Infection, I would strongly suggest to identify the allergen first.

Alternatively one might argue the allergen is irrelevant, because the goal is to heal the immune system, such that it ignores the "allergen".

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However, my reasoning for identifying the allergen first is that this will actually help healing the immune system: it will suggest what's wrong in the first place, and so it allows to narrow in on the right approach to healing.

Whichever approach you choose, don't pay for the standard blanket treatment of allopathic medicine, which here again is, guess what, anti-inflammatory drugs like cyclosporine, oclacitinib, and others! See for example these guys. Shocking really.

The allopathic standard blanket treatment likely will successfully make the allergy symptoms temporarily disappear (that's their purpose), but certainly not provide cure: impossible because such medicaments prevent the immune system from starting the healing process.

So you will soon be back with your dog to pay for more. More "consultation" and more drugs.

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Sometimes more of the same drugs, other times they may try some different anti-inflammatories. But always that. Allopathic physicians cannot offer anything else: Temporarily suppressing or palliating the allergy symptoms is way too lucrative to replace it with attempts to cure.

Also don't forget, more often than not the vet hasn't verified whether it really is an allergy at all, namely when the vet hasn't bothered to identify the allergen. No allergen, no allergy! So then, after all is said and paid, all was for nothing.

"But the disturbing symptoms are gone?" - No, by now your dog has way more, more of the same symptoms at the same body location or rather new symptoms in new locations. And all of these are related to the chosen treatment of the first symptoms. Because still, cure is outstanding.

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By the way, did you actually read that [earlier linked webpage](#) where the [allopathic veterinarians](#) suggest [anti-inflammatory drugs](#) to treat [allergies](#)?

As should no longer come as a surprise, you see there they wrongly describe allergies as a [disease](#). They even say they are "excited" for the discovery of [yet another anti-inflammatory drug](#) (more choice, more income). And they do [not once](#) discuss the [cause](#) of allergies! Oh dear.

Conversely, it is refreshing, yes outright [helpful](#), when [for once](#) we can trust [accurate medical description, here from the Cleveland Clinic](#):

"Environmental Allergies: Medicines help [treat](#) your allergy [symptoms](#) once you have them, but there are several steps you can take to [prevent](#) [symptoms](#) [before](#) [they](#) [occur](#)" (emphasis by myself).

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Note that the clinic here does not even purport to offer cure with medicines, they make clear outright that all that the medicines will do is: treat the symptoms. Exactly!

**Sources of allergens**

If you choose to follow my suggestion to *first* identify the allergen, you may need some tips how to go about that. Primarily allergens are to be found in vaccines, medicaments, food, living quarters, or the environment.

**Vaccine Allergens**

- alien cell fragments
- adjuvants etc

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If you notice (new) allergy symptoms up to a week after vaccination, then the allergen may have been in the vaccine, as follows.

When *segmented* or *weakened* or *killed* pathogens are grown in a cell culture (of *monkey kidney* cells, another dog's kidney cells, or other), and the harvested *antigens* are isolated from that tissue culture, *no purification method can yield a pure vaccine suspension*, it always also contains tiny cell fragments from the growth medium used. These alien cell fragments of course can *cause* an allergic reaction in the vaccinated dog or person: The organism's *immune system* treats the alien substance like a *pathogen*, although this alien substance would not actually harm the organism.

In addition, the vaccine suspension is not just the *antigen* material but also comprises *chemical adjuvants, stabilizers, and preservatives* - one or...
more of which can cause an allergic reaction in the vaccinated dog or person.

**Medicament Allergens**

*Many* medicaments contain allergens, for example:

- Antibiotics like *bacitracin, neomycin, amoxicillin, ampicillin, sulfonamide, tetracycline, chloramphenicol, penicillin*, etc. Surprisingly, the latter, *penicillin*, accounts for 75% of the *fatal* anaphylactic shocks in the USA!

- Antimycotics/ Antifungals

- Antiseptics

- Corticosteroids

- NSAIDs like *ibuprofen, naproxen*, etc.

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• Anaesthetics like benzocaine, etc
• Antiseizure drugs like carbamazepine, lamotrigine, phenytoin, etc
• Antihistamine like promethazine, etc
• Chemotherapy drugs
• and even the common aspirin, yes.

Food Allergens

This is what for most people first comes to mind, "the allergen must be in the food". Sometimes indeed it is, but an intolerance is no allergy.

Symptoms of intolerance can be Diarrhea, Vomiting, or other Digestive disorders including intestinal pain, but intolerances are always limited to the digestive system.

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Conversely, symptoms of an allergy can show anywhere in the organism, *including* on the skin. In dogs, **Skin Allergy symptoms** are the rule, not the exception.

Be aware that an **allergy** always requires an **allergen**, and the **immune system** responds to an allergen in a clearly identifiable way, eg with the production of the **antibody Immunoglobulin E** (IgE) to fight the allergen *as if* it was a **pathogen**: IgE releases histamine and other chemicals that start the immune response and **trigger** the **allergy symptoms**.

If a **blood test** does not show increased levels of antibodies like IgE, or T cells, **or other molecular immune responses**, then there is no allergen, and so no allergy!

**Common food allergens:**

- beef protein

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• milk products
• wheat products
• barley products
• soya products
• corn/maize
• nuts
• seeds

I disagree with the common statement: eggs. There are multiple evolutionary protection mechanisms that prevent harm to what is meant to become offspring (eggs would naturally grow chicks). I suspect that where eggs are the suspected allergen, more often than not it is something else.

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In fact, because of the evolutionary protection mechanisms, eggs are probably among the safest foods of all. Despite any and all the pathogens and chicken feed medicaments that (particularly) cage hens are exposed to.

Certainly MUCH safer than meat grown in our modern food chain: Meat is the most contaminated food of all. Maybe organic meat is an exception, but where can we buy truly organically raised meat, and at what price?

**Household Allergens**

- mold spores
- dust mites
- flea bite saliva
- cockroach droppings

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• tobacco smoke
• some carpet and blanket fibers
• some plastics
• many paints and varnishes
• all "room refreshers" with aerosols

While shed proteins in cat hair or dander can be an allergen to dogs, and dog hair or dander can be an allergen to people, hair or dander of another dog apparently is no allergen to dogs.

Although rare, a metal dog collar can trigger allergy symptoms. And those collars shouldn't be used anyway: they are uncomfortable and restrict breathing which causes stress, and stress causes health and behavior issues, up to and including aggression.

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A **quality leather collar** is way more comfortable, and the **right leash training** has many more benefits than to stop pulling.

**Environment Allergens**

- grass, flower, weed, and tree *pollen*
- outdoor *mold spores* on decaying leaves, or from ventilation and exhaust shafts of subway stations, restaurants, office buildings, etc
- *airborne chemical emissions* from factories and engines.

**How to test for allergens**

So now, if your dog is suspected to have a Skin Allergy, not a [Skin Infection](#), and if you choose to follow my suggestion to *first* identify the [allergen](#),

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consider the listed sources of allergens to quickly narrow in on the most likely allergens to your dog.

For example:

- If your dog wasn't subjected to a vaccination, you can rule out vaccine allergens.
- If you didn't readily pay for the standard drugs of allopathic medicine, you can rule out medicament allergens.
- Obviously food your dog gets every day, so to rule out food allergens I'd suggest to keep a slim diary with notes on the exact food your dog is eating. With kibble or tin "food" of course this is difficult since you can never know what is really in the package: labels are misleading. But with homemade food you know exactly what you give and you can change foods one by one.

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In reality, **household allergens** seem to be more common than food allergens. Again with the above list, it should be easy to test for the various household allergens by changing or eliminating what you can.

With **environment allergens**, testing is more difficult: you can't (or shouldn't) keep a GSD indoors all year just because there are always some pollen carried with the wind. The good news here is that, unlike with people, dogs rarely react allergic to pollen anyway.

**How allergen identification helps treatment**

So now when you have narrowed in on the likely **allergen** or even identified it, **focused treatment** of the **immune system disorder** is much easier.

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Remember that earlier I explained that, in my view, the cause of allergies is earlier harm done, and most likely the harm done was vaccination while sick, causing a severe shock to the immune system that left confusion behind (on a molecular level).

Treating just the element of shock and the resulting confusion - with the goal of cure(!) - is the same whether it is a shock to the nervous system say from a car accident or a shock to the immune system say from vaccination while sick: incremental exposure to achieve desensitization and thus re-establish immunological tolerance.

1. First we make sure that we support the health of all body systems: the Foundation of Health.

2. At the same time we give them rest by completely avoiding further shock and

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confusion (here avoiding the allergen, vaccination, drugs, etc).

3. When there are clear signs of recovery (no further sickness, health is stabilizing), a first micro-exposure starts the desensitization.

4. In the absence of allergy symptoms, exposure is incrementally increased and held steady for weeks at a time.

Note that this regimen of desensitization is very different to the allergen immunotherapy undertaken by allopathic physicians which actually amounts to further shocks to the immune system (injecting the allergen into the bloodstream etc) that cause further harm, including the risk of anaphylactic shock!

Instead, this regimen of desensitization follows the well-established principle of homeopathy (infinitesimal stimulation), and so it is safe and

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The MyGermanShepherd Health Manual

works very well for food allergens and
environment allergens too, see for example here.

Conclusion

So, is it really true that "there is no cure for
allergies"?

No, clearly not: There is cure for every disorder if
the physician and we actually seek cure, not
suppressing or palliating symptoms.

Both the canine and the human organism have an
incredible capacity to self-heal IF WE SUPPORT
SELF-HEALING. Obviously not when we continue
to intoxicate the body's cells!

Although so obviously the foundation, the
Foundation of Health is being violated all the time
by physicians and their patients. Then, cure is
outstanding.

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Tumor/ Cancer

Tumor (neoplasm) describes the condition of abnormal tissue growth because the respective cells divide more than healthy cells would or because they do not die when healthy cells would.

This is caused by the insufficient presence of PML molecules (and likely others) that in healthy cells are believed to regulate senescence (biological aging) and ultimately to enforce apoptosis (programmed cell death).

Many tumors are benign (eg moles, warts, lipomas), those that are malignant are called cancer (Melanoma, Hemangiosarcoma, etc). Malignant tumors differ from benign tumors in that they invade surrounding tissue or even

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metastasize (spread) to other parts of the body, and in both cases harm or destroy healthy cells.

Tumor is an *acquired disorder* of the *immune system* that is *triggered* by an *acute shock* or by *chronic intoxication* of the cells that are critical to destroy own cells that have gone awry (tumor cells).

The *acute shock* may have been *caused* by:

- *any vaccination*, because a vaccine consists of many alien substances that are *injected directly into the bloodstream* which *shocks within seconds all body systems*! Something that never happens in nature, not even when a deadly virus enters the organism through mouth or nose.

- *radiation*, because an overdose of radiation *shocks within seconds all body systems*! This

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is not the radiation say from an x-ray though, these are well below shock levels.

- a chemical substance (in medicaments, "food", household, or environment), because at the "right" amount some substances that reach the bloodstream do indeed shock the entire organism.

- a pathogen, because some pathogens can literally overrun the cardiovascular system's defence mechanisms if they manage to enter the bloodstream directly, say through a lesion.

The chronic intoxication may have been caused by:

- industrial dog food or "treats"

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a chemical substance (in medicaments, "food", household, or environment) if it is perpetually or frequently

- inhaled, say room "refreshers", varnish, or smoke

- ingested, say scavenging yard care products like Roundup, or licking off floor cleaner detergent or wood paint

- absorbed through the skin, say carpet adhesives or cleaning or laundry detergents.

Note that a tumor or cancer never is a disease, there is no pathogen involved in the change in bodily tissue, and so there is no infection either.

Some physicians however rightfully raise the question whether cancer is a defect, referring to the only about 5% to 10% of all cancers [that]

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are thought to result directly from gene defects inherited from a parent”. If that thought is correct then indeed the particular cancer would be a defect because disorders can only be acquired.

Here’s why we have to conclude that not even those "5% to 10%" are inherited cancers, but instead also acquired:

What has been found are

- a vast number of *acquired* DNA changes (*variances*) that are not heritable that *many* individuals share that have cancer. A great example is the **TP53 gene abnormality** that *more than half* of all human cancer cases share. *No variance is shared by all, not even close!*

- and a much smaller number of *inherited* DNA changes (*mutations*) in *oncogenes* and *tumor suppressor genes* that *"run in families"*, those

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"5% to 10%". Again, up to more than half of those family members may have had cancer. These are the cases that label as "Family Cancer Syndromes" and make some physicians conclude that a few cancers are heritable.

If you now read the notes that further explain defects, you see that none of what has been found warrants the claim "a few cancers are heritable".

Either way, as (most or indeed all) cancer is acquired, clearly cancer is a disorder because:

1. A disorder is an acquired physiological dysfunction of an organ or body system that shows as over/under-production or over/under-utilization of a bodily substance...

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2. In the case of cancer there is an under-utilization (and maybe an under-production) of PML molecules (and likely others) that in healthy cells would prevent the uncontrolled tissue growth that describes cancer.

3. Conversely, a defect is an inherited or acquired impairment of an organ, body structure, or body function other than a disorder.

All that aside, here are some interesting facts:

- Almost all cases of cancer (both in people and in dogs) show only later in life, and outside the biological transitions, after years if not decades of chronic intoxication that violates the Foundation of Health.

- The remaining few cases of cancer in newborns can be fully explained with having been acquired prenatal in the uterus or

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through the umbilical cord: Many disorders (and some defects and diseases too) are known to be transmitted to the unborn offspring if the mother is too sick (known or unknown) for the evolutionary protection mechanisms for offspring to fully take effect.

- Indeed in many cases it is known from medical records that before the baby was born the pregnant mother frequently violated the Foundation of Health: smoking, drinking, medicaments, and worse (this includes the massive nationwide Swedish Family-Cancer Database: 10 million records; studies refer to people, no such studies for dogs).

- In addition, note that most newborns (both babies and puppies) already are subjected to injections and vaccinations that amount to an acute shock to all body systems of the young organism.

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It is *obvious* (common sense!) that the majority of these newborns then move on to develop health issues from those *shocks* to all *body systems*: skin problems following *integumentary system disorders*, intestinal problems following *digestive system disorders*, allergies and even cancer following *immune system disorders*, etc.

A *"family history of cancer"* too does *not* suggest an inherited defect (click the link to see why). In fact, *none of the factors they list here* *"make it more likely"* that the cancer is inherited, *all* are easily explained with what you learned *here* and *here*.

So really, we have every reason to consider cancer an *acquired disorder*, and no reason to accept the *widely copied* point of view that *"genetics play an important role in the development of canine cancer"*, they clearly don't.

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Accordingly I wouldn't hesitate for a second to adopt a dog from a handler raising her arms in despair: "Unfortunately every dog in this lineage has had cancer!". But I would not even consider releasing her from her responsibility where for example she brags: "The dog is fully vaccinated".

How very different from the average owner who hasn't read this Health Manual, isn't it?

Make sure you share this widely, so as to reduce cancer risk.

**Who Suffers Tumor/ Cancer**

Like people, dogs are susceptible to a large variety of benign and malignant tumors in their skin, bones and organs. Because, like people (maybe more than people?) they are subjected to sustained cell intoxication with *carcinogens* in...
household products, yard products, medicaments, vaccines, food, etc.

It would be naive to assume one can persistently do harm to the organism's cells without health consequences, right? This aspect of health care is far underrated in media and medicine, that's why so few people care what they add to the organism on a daily basis.

Other than this generally applicable cause of sickness, purebred dogs with long lines of inbreeding (like what is happening to German Shepherds) are more likely to develop tumors because inbreeding reduces genetic variation and thus immunological responsiveness.

Where an unharmed immune system is able to identify and eliminate most nuances of cells that have gone awry, a weakened immune system will not be able to catch each of those. That's when

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those cells can uncontrollably proliferate to become a tumor.

This is why all over the world inbreeding among closely related people (incest) is punishable by law. Unfortunately this is not the case for dogs.

Finally, unaltered dogs too are far more likely to develop cancer than those that have been safely spayed or neutered at a young age (6 months of age the latest).

Contrary to popular belief, the reason likely is more behavior-related than related to the impact that altering has on the endocrine system:

1. Altered dogs do not "roam around", and so they have much less of a chance to get in contact with carcinogenic agents, whether pathogens transmitted by sick animals or their residues (excrement, dander, hair, saliva, etc) or whether chemical substances

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in the environment (landfill, garbage dump, pesticides, etc).

2. Owners that alter their dog early or that acquire an altered dog tend to be more informed, considerate, and responsible in life in general, for example:

- regular **health checks by a quality vet**
- critical evaluation of the *long-term* benefit and **risks of prescriptions** and treatments
- avoiding **environmental intoxication** with chemicals etc
- feeding a **REAL food natural diet**
- administering **remedies to safeguard the dog** from worms, mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, mites, etc

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avoiding *unnecessary vaccinations and all "boosters".*

Obviously, points 1 and 2 do not apply to each individual dog and owner, yet *overall* ie statistically these two points have the most significant ramifications for the likelihood of an individual dog to develop cancer.

**Warning Signs**

The subsequent warning signs cover *all types* of cancer, but be aware that different types of cancer tend to have their characteristic symptoms. Overall, the most common cancer symptoms are:

- skin spots with unusual coloring, either suddenly appearing and persisting or continually growing

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• sores or lesions that do not heal
• sudden weight loss without obvious reason
• loss of appetite without obvious reason
• unusual and unexplained bleeding
• unusual swelling anywhere on the body *
• repeatedly blood in vomit or urine or stool *
• unusual discharge from any body opening, incl. ears, eyes, nose *
• offensive odor from mouth or skin *
• difficulty when eating or swallowing *
• persistent hesitation to exercise (lethargy) or loss of stamina *
• persistent lameness or stiffness *

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- difficulty breathing *
- difficulty urinating or defecating *
- pain when breathing or urinating or defecating *
- unexplained recurrent vomiting *
- unexplained recurrent diarrhea *

* These are specifically the symptoms of the types of cancer most common in German Shepherds.

These most common types of cancer in German Shepherds are:

- gastrointestinal tumors: foremost in the stomach, colon, pancreas, and esophagus
- osteosarcoma or chondrosarcoma: cancer of bones or cartilage

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• lymphosarcoma or lymphoma: cancer of the immune system itself (lymphocytes)

• mast cell tumors: mast cells too are integral to the immune system, they fight pathogens primarily in the skin, intestines, and respiratory tract.

As you may have noticed, even just the symptoms of the most common types of cancer in German Shepherds can likewise characterize many other ailments. Therefore do not outright conclude "it's cancer!" when you notice some of these symptoms.

On the other hand, some of these symptoms will naturally come together, one after another. Therefore do see a quality veterinarian when you notice several symptoms in parallel or in sequence that will typically show in parallel or in sequence when a tumor is present.

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An example will make this clearer:

Say for the second time within a week you notice there is blood in your dog's vomit (thus not necessarily consecutively). While you're wondering "How comes that?", you remember that recently you found your dog has been very lethargic, possibly even lame or stiff.

So now you start to analyze in your mind:

- "very lethargic, and again vomiting blood"
- "it isn't hot summer now, and the dog is not eating any different than usual, nor is the dog exercising more than usual"
- "Could the dog have intestinal worms?"
- "Unlikely, (s)he's had deworming done last month"
- "A virus maybe?"

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"Unlikely, the dog is seven years old, had plenty of chances to acquire natural immunity, suffered no serious illness, and had no antibiotics nor steroids treatment"

"It can't be cancer, can it?!?"

"Wait, what's the dog getting to eat?"

"Kibble. - Damn! So I really should've given the dog real food!"

"I now better make an appointment with a quality vet for a complete blood test."

Remember this is just an example. Symptoms, dog's lifestyle and dog's living environment, as well as medical, exercise, and diet history of the dog, and how much common sense training you've acquired from mygermanshepherd.org or elsewhere, all factors play a role.

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In short, only several symptoms together and the absence of certain other symptoms suggest a tumor (and indeed any other ailment). A quality veterinarian, ideally in an animal hospital, will then confirm the preliminary diagnosis, and whether the tumor is benign or malignant.

Yet, ending my example with the conclusion to do a complete blood test was on purpose. Because, the most reliable ways to confirm a cancer diagnosis are:

1. Lab tests: identifying the existence and measuring the level of characteristic substances in body fluids like blood, urine, or saliva that together indicate tumorous cells anywhere in the body - cheapest, and always feasible.

2. Biopsy: analyzing a tissue sample (taken per needle, endoscope, or surgery) in the lab - costly, and not always feasible.

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3. Imaging procedures: visually confirming unusual tissue growth per Ultrasound, CT scan, MRI, Radionuclide scan, PET scan, or X-ray - costly, and not always feasible.

Preventing Cancer

Firstly and most importantly, do not fall for the fate fallacy. Cancer is no fate. Cancer is preventable because it is an acquired disorder. And cancer is curable if you don't wait too long to incorporate the right lifestyle choices, because this is what matters most!

It really is like this, and I can't stress it enough:

1. what prevents cancer
2. what prevents cancer
3. what prevents cancer

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Where a newborn has cancer (which is very rare), the cancer was passed on from the mother while in utero. When you pass on cancerous cells or cancer-triggering molecules, then obviously the recipient will suffer cancer too if the immune system isn't ready to fight the cancerous substance, as is the case with newborns.

In fact, the only reason why so many pregnant mothers that persistently violate the Foundation of Health yet conceive (seemingly) healthy babies is that biologically the whole process of pregnancy and conceiving is so protective of the newborn that it is unusual for a disorder or defect or disease to be transmitted by the mother. Usually some complication caused that.

Had evolution not provided for this fundamental protection of offspring, neither people nor dogs would ever have emerged! Historically, offspring

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would have succumbed to *diseases*, today offspring would succumb to *disorders*.

Evolution has yielded a similar quality of protection for puppies. In fact, *newborn* puppies with cancer are unheard of. *One* of the reasons is that canine mothers don't smoke and don't drink alcohol.

Having read the above you should have two objections:

1. *"Why is it then that a few cases of pediatric cancer exist, ie cancer in dogs younger than 12 months?"*

2. *"Why is it then that certain breeds of dogs, incl. German Shepherds, have a higher incidence of cancer?"*

As for 1) The short answer is that unfortunately puppies as young as *a few weeks* are being subjected to multivalent vaccination cocktails,

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even six-packs DHLPPCv! And this repetitively up to four times before they even reach 12 months of age! As is the "standard" vaccination protocol in many nations.

These vaccination cocktails and "boosters" cause an instant disruption of the immune system and are known to harm the puppy lifelong. Indeed, the fourth Interview & Review in our series, a top immunologist, can open your eyes and mind in ways nothing else can.

It is not surprising then that any pediatric cancer almost always originates near the injection site, ie where the young puppy's immune system was shocked, got confused, and lost its ability to identify and fight awry cells.

The long answer would discuss more cancer-causing factors: starting with the toxic dog "food" already the youngest puppies have to try to
survive on, and ending with veterinary steroid and NSAID administration, even while sick.

In fact, it is surprising how well dogs cope with what we do to them. If thanks to evolution dogs weren't that resilient, every ordinarily raised puppy likely would develop cancer before 12 months old.

As for 2) The fact that German Shepherds and some other breeds have a higher incidence of cancer does not make cancer an inherited gene defect.

The reason for the higher susceptibility of GSDs and other breeds to cancer is their overall weaker immune system, the prime cause of which is the excessive inbreeding.

Not surprisingly, this overall weaker immune system also shows in a higher susceptibility to Allergies (another immune system disorder) and

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Arthritis (another immune system disorder). All very common in German Shepherds indeed.

But it's great if you remain critical first, because this is how we people learn best: scrutinizing.

Back to preventing tumors in dogs. Since a tumor signals an immune system disorder, obviously again the key is to protect and to strengthen the immune system.

How to protect the immune system

We can protect the dog's immune system by:

1. NOT vaccinating the dog unless a prior titer shows no reaction at all to the antigen in question.

2. NOT vaccinating a puppy unless a prior titer shows that the passive immunity from maternal antibodies has now worn off, and

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so the vaccine can be effective, while before it cannot!

3. NOT allowing multivalent vaccines to be given where single vaccines are available, ie the common vaccine combinations all the way through to DHLPPCV are a strict no-no!

4. NOT accepting a "booster" vaccination unless a prior titer shows no reaction at all to the antigen in question.

5. NOT vaccinating a dog that is sick or has been sick in any way in the last three months.

6. NOT vaccinating a dog against diseases that are highly unlikely to be contracted in the particular dog's living environment and given the dog's lifestyle.

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7. NOT vaccinating a dog against diseases that are neither life-threatening nor a permanent material impairment of quality of life.

8. NOT vaccinating a dog where the dog's lifestyle and living environment provides for the much better natural immunization because it is complete and general: it trains the entire defense system.

9. NOT exposing the dog to environmental intoxication in the house or yard (floor cleaners, adhesives, wood stains, pesticides etc).

10. NOT exposing the dog to cell toxins in industrial dog "food".

11. NOT ever accepting corticosteroids or other steroids or NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).

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12. NOT allowing antibiotics treatment unless:

a) A culture has been grown in the lab and it confirmed that the pathogen in question indeed is a bacterium.

b) AND the bacterium is known to not yet be resistant against the suggested antibiotic.

 c) AND the disease caused or triggered by the bacterium is life-threatening or a permanent material impairment of quality of life.

 d) AND a less harmful natural treatment option is unknown - because contrary to the marketing of allopathic medicine antibiotics always are harmful!

Do click the links to understand why.
How to strengthen the immune system

We can strengthen the dog's immune system by:

1. Feeding a healthy variety of natural foods only.

2. Allowing the entire immune system to practice, to train, to gain more experience through natural immunization wherever sensible. The sensibility check is the long list just above.

3. Avoiding stress from the Pack conflict as perceived by the dog, and from fear.

That's it. A few simple points to consider and to practice that prevent tumors!

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Don't believe it? Try it before you deny it. You have nothing to lose, and all to gain. Try it with your next dog if for your current dog these insights reached you too late.

Think about it: Evolution did not prepare people nor dogs to die of *own cells that have gone awry* (that's what cancer is). Quite the opposite: Both dogs and people only exist today because evolution prepared us with a huge arsenal of *effective immune system barriers* that even catch out *own cells* that have gone bad! Truly remarkable.

We will get back to this when we discuss the *newest option* for *cancer treatment*.

The problem is, many tumors we cannot notice until after they have grown dangerously large, or worse, have *metastasized* (proliferated to other parts of the body). Hence why for tumors probably more than for any other ailment

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prevention is key: See the above lists how to protect and how to strengthen the immune system.

Sun exposure

Another important means to prevent tumors relates to the German Shepherd being an outdoor dog (or at least meant to be an outdoor dog).

Outdoor dogs catch much sun. While wild dogs would naturally seek shade at times of the strongest sun exposure, unfortunately the modern domesticated dogs may not always find a shady spot, not even a cool spot, on the owner's premises.

If your dog is outdoors around noon and has limited chances to seek shade, please make sure to provide some shade, plenty of water, and sun protection to your dog. Using a viscous baby
lotion like this indeed is fine: fewest chemicals, comes close to being natural, and protection factor 50.

Because dogs are just as susceptible to skin cancer as people are, yet they themselves can neither apply suncream nor wear sunglasses, hat, and long-sleeve shirt.

The sun protection need only be applied to thinly haired areas, thus normally only on the nose and the ear pinna. But make sure that you use a viscous lotion so that nothing can run down the pinna into the ear canal, or in the nose!

These cheaper baby sun-blockers are available as sprays too, for example Babyganics' mineral-based sun protection spray. Again, just be sure not to spray inside the nose or inside the ear.

If your dog is a lot outdoors in the sun, a UV Protective Shirt can provide great protection

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against melanoma, mast cell tumor, squamous cell carcinoma, and other types of skin cancer. We don't have it, but if you are interested the right size for Miguel as tall but athletic adult GSD would be what they call 3XL (they offer up to 5XL).

Plastics

Also, be aware that plastic bowls for food or drink and likewise plastic toys can be sources of carcinogens ie cancer-causing agents. To be safe, it may be simplest to try to avoid all kitchen plastics (I do).

The most dangerous kitchen plastic obviously is a kettle made of plastic inside where the water boils, as well as plastic bakeware. Heating up any plastic in contact with any food is so insane it should be punishable by law.

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Finally, even city water in many communities has been found to contain carcinogenic chemicals. In this case we can minimize risks by using a water filter.

**Veterinary exams**

For adult dogs a *yearly* veterinary exam should be the absolute minimum, because dogs experience *more years in our time*. For a puppy three visits in the first year of life, and for aging dogs twice yearly.

But be sure you *save the money* that you would normally spend on the crap that *allopathic vets sell* off their shelves, and *save the money* that you would normally spend on prescribed medicaments and other *blanket* treatments.

**Instead, use a fraction of that to pay for veterinary exams, not visits and prescriptions,** or

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even worse, **vaccines**. More precisely, at each of the above advised vet visits, discuss **what is sensible to do at that time**, and **order** the respective exam. I say **order** because you must indeed **order** the vet to get out of his daily office routine and do this instead, yes:

- Urine analysis (urinalysis)
- Complete blood count (CBC)
- Blood protein testing by electrophoresis
- Antigen titer
- Biopsy of suspicious tissue (with needle, endoscope, or surgery)
- Cytology
- Circulating tumor cell test
- Endoscopy

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• Colonoscopy

• Imaging test (Radiology): CT scan, MRI, X-ray, Radionuclide scan, Ultrasound, Virtual endoscopy, Capsule endoscopy, etc.

For us, cancer is unlikely because we have always been feeding REAL food, no industrial waste products (pet "food", "treats"). So typically I order a complete blood count (CBC) or urinalysis, because both of these exams allow to detect a lot more than a tumor.

Revelations of Complete Blood Count and Urinalysis

• how well various organs work

• how well various organs work together

• deficiencies of certain proteins and hormones

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• how well the overall defense system works
• urinary tract infection
• kidney infection
• other infections
• kidney stones
• diabetes
• lupus
• blood pressure
• anemia
• leukemia, etc.

And every three years, when the legally required Rabies vaccination is on the agenda (which will change to every seven years, because it protects

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for life anyway!) I have an antigen titer done for Parvo and Distemper (only).

Urinalysis is cheap. Complete blood count costs a bit more. But both these exams cost only a fraction of what the average ordinary vet's ongoing treatment costs. You see, prevention is key.

**Treating Cancer**

When prevention came too late, hopefully treatment does not, because look at the total cost of delayed treatment:

- The later treatment starts, the harsher the intervention required, eg larger area to be surgically removed, and/or higher doses of cytostatics in chemotherapy, and/or higher dose of radiation or whatever.

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The later treatment starts, the more severe the "side effects" will be.

The later treatment starts, the longer it will take.

The later treatment starts, the more frequent the treatment may have to be administered.

The later treatment starts, the more costly it will be.

The later treatment starts, the smaller the chances of survival!

Each type of tumor is different in symptoms, growth rate, and prognosis. 60% of tumors found by routine screening are benign and can be cut out or lasered without additional treatment. And most malignant tumors are curable if identified early, but do require additional treatment.
Treatment options

Open surgery
Cutting away all or at least part of the identified cancerous cell cluster, including a safe margin around it.

Minimally invasive surgery
Using a laparoscope to remove all or at least part of the identified cancerous cell cluster, including a safe margin around it.

Cryotherapy
Using liquid nitrogen or argon gas to produce localized extreme cold to kill identified cancer cells.

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Hyperthermia

Using high-energy radio waves or other means to produce localized extreme heat to kill identified cancer cells or to make them more sensitive to radiation or chemotherapy drugs.

Laser therapy

Using powerful beams of light to kill identified cancer cells.

Photodynamic therapy

Using drugs that react to a certain type of light in order to kill identified cancer cells when they are targeted with this type of light source.

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Radiation therapy

Using high doses of radiation to kill or weaken identified cancer cells.

Chemotherapy

Using drugs to stop or slow down growth of fast-dividing cells, thus unfortunately including blood-producing cells, hair cells, and the cells of the mucous membranes in mouth and throat as well as the digestive system!

Hormone therapy

Using pills or injections or even surgery to permanently stop or temporarily block the body's ability to produce the specific hormones that the identified type of cancer needs to grow, or to interfere with how these specific hormones perform in the body.

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Homeopathy

Using the right homeopathic remedy to stimulate the immune system to better fight the cancer cells. Be aware though that, since homeopathic remedies are cheap to make, very very few veterinarians bother to study homeopathy (after all they want to make a good living).

Therefore, unfortunately there is little chance that you find a quality homeopath who has put as much effort into studying the less-than-lucrative homeopathy as a quality ordinary vet puts effort into studying the hugely lucrative allopathic medicine.

Stem cell transplant

Injecting your dog's earlier taken (autologous) stem cells or a matching dog's (allogeneic) stem cells through a needle in the vein, either to
replace own stem cells destroyed by radiation therapy or chemotherapy, or to use the graft-versus-tumor effect to refresh the immune system to fight cancer cells.

**Molecularly targeted therapy or Precision medicine**

Using drugs or individual chemicals to block the action of certain molecules (enzymes, proteins, etc) that the identified cancer cells need to grow and proliferate.

**Immunotherapy**

This newest option for tumor treatment is a giant leap from the graft-versus-tumor effect mentioned under *Stem cell transplant*. It is the most promising cancer treatment in history, and

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that means something because cancer treatment has a long history.

Immunotherapy is the name for all types of treatment that use an agent to stimulate the body's own immune system to better fight identified cancer cells. Many types of Immunotherapy have been developed in just the last decade, and are now being refined, tested, and performed.

The agent may be a drug, an individual chemical, a certain type of healthy body cells, molecules like a protein, or even tumor cells or a weakened bacterium or other pathogen (so yes there is a lot of similarity with the principles of homeopathy).

The agent is then modified or manipulated in a way that improves the immune system's ability to detect and mark or directly destroy the identified cancer cells.

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Just one type of Immunotherapy that may serve as great example here because it has already been shown to be successful, and that for the cure of a cancer type that traditionally was seen to be incurable (leukemia), is what's called CAR-T cell therapy (linked is an article that came up first in Google).

Let's just hope economies of scale will bring prices down soon.

**Biological therapy**

Immunotherapy that uses an agent made from living organisms goes by the name Biological therapy. Thus this is a subset of Immunotherapy.
Conclusion

In the case of cancer diagnosis, given how urgent the right treatment is to have the best chance for cure, I would strongly suggest you get a second and even third opinion before commencing (and paying for) any type of treatment. Different types of cancer may require different types of treatment.

While most ordinary allopathic physicians still prescribe open surgery together with chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy for almost any type of cancer(!), you have seen above that today there exist many more options - and most times better ones.

You see, nothing beats education when you or your dog are sick. So I know this helps, should you ever need it.

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Non-Infectious Eye Problems

There are many potential Eye Problems among dogs where the cause is not an infection but which may lead to an inflammation nonetheless.

Common examples:

Distichiasis

Thought to be an inherited defect, Distichiasis is characterized by some but not all eyelashes growing from an abnormal location on the eyelid or growing in an abnormal direction such that they touch and irritate the cornea or get stuck in the eyelid margin.

Distichiasis leads to permanent eye inflammation. Lubrication typically is insufficient, and correction or removal by an ophthalmologist may be required.
Ectropion ("drooping eyelid")

An *acquired* defect resulting in eversion of the eyelids which leads to ocular inflammation due to exposure to pollutants in the environment.

Common causes of Ectropion are muscle weakness under the eyes in aging dogs, facial paralysis, or dog bite trauma.

Facial paralysis itself is caused by some potent antibiotics and other medicaments (*eg* Doxycycline can cause facial paralysis), by vaccination that leads to vaccinosis, or (rarely) by allergies, stress, or injury.

Neonatal Ectropion is extremely rare and, *so often* misunderstood:

When a newborn baby or puppy carries a defect, this by itself does *not* mean that the defect is *inherited*. Many defects are *acquired* prenatal in the uterus or through the umbilical cord.

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To be an *inherited* defect, the defect has to be a mutation existing in the genetic code such that some amino acid sequences are different from the norm, with that norm being considered healthy.

**Entropion**

Like Ectropion, Entropion too actually is an *acquired* defect where the (generally lower) eyelid turns inwards such that eyelashes and skin of the outer eyelid rub against the cornea, leading to ocular inflammation.

Common causes of Entropion are muscle weakness under the eyes in aging dogs, dog bite trauma, and eye infection.

Again, neonatal Entropion is extremely rare. Make sure you re-read *Inherited or Acquired* so that you don't fall for, and pay for, treatment mistakes so many veterinarians and MDs are making.

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Macroblepharon

Thought to be an inherited defect, an abnormally large eyelid opening may lead to inflammation of the exposed cornea due to pollutants in the environment.

Persistent Pupillary Membranes

PPM are postnatal persistent blood vessel remnants in the anterior chamber of the eye that supplied nutrients to the developing lens of the eye before birth, but which have failed to regress naturally in the neonatal period by age four to five weeks.

While in many dogs (and people) these blood vessel remnants cause no problems, they can impair vision, and in the worst case they can lead to blindness.

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PPM is thought to be an inherited defect, but the defective gene has not been found.

**Cataract**

Like people, dogs often develop Cataracts. A Cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens, resulting in impaired vision by reducing the amount of light that is being correctly refracted by the lens.

The lens consists primarily of water and proteins, water does not chemically change, the proteins do. A Cataract is an acquired defect that changes the protein structure in the lens such that the lens becomes opaque.

This change to protein structure occurs normally with aging (most older dogs and older people develop cataracts), but it can also result from radiation (x-rays or much sun exposure), from many medicaments (for example *Prednisone* and

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other *steroidal drugs* frequently cause Cataracts), from the *wrong diet*, or from injury.

**Progressive Retinal Atrophy**

PRA is an inherited *defect* that shows as gradual deterioration of the retina where the rod cells in the retina are genetically programmed to die early, typically around age 7 years.

PRA affects both eyes simultaneously, and in GSDs both male and female dogs are affected. Fortunately, PRA is not painful, the affected dog merely experiences a *gradual* loss of vision, several years before a healthy dog will experience it.

In the early stages of the defect, an affected dog becomes nightblind and cannot see well in dim lighting. As the defect progresses, daytime vision also fails. As the affected dog's vision fails, the

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pupils become increasingly dilated, leading to a "shine" in the eyes. Also the lens of the eye may become cloudy or opaque, resulting in a cataract.

Provided that the affected dog's environment remains constant, an affected dog usually adapts very well to the impaired vision because the vision is *gradually* declining.

**Retinal Dysplasia**

Ordinarily an inherited *defect*, but can also be acquired.

As *inherited defect*, Retinal Dysplasia is an abnormality in the development of the retina where the two layers of the retina do not form together properly.

In mild cases (retinal fold) the dog may not notice a vision problem at all. In severe cases however (retinal detachment) the dog will be completely...
blind. Either way will be from birth, because congenital Retinal Dysplasia is not progressive, meaning the dog is born with whatever the condition of the retina is and it will not get worse.

As acquired defect, Retinal Dysplasia can be caused by injury, viral infection, intoxication from medicaments or vaccines, or nutritional deficiency. Any and all of these can lead to tissue damage of the retina that closely resembles the neonatal defect.

**Pannus**

Contrary to Persistent Pupillary Membranes that are characterized by postnatal persistent blood vessel remnants in the anterior chamber of the eye, Pannus is characterized by blood vessels growing in bodily tissue where they aren't meant to grow. Here, in the cornea and/or conjunctiva of the eye.

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This abnormal blood vessel growth then leads to *chronic* inflammation because the **immune system** naturally attempts to eat up cells that have gone awry, and blood vessels consist of closely packed cells.

This makes this final example of non-infectious eye problems - **Pannus** - a fine example to **learn to understand inflammation**, and so to understand the harmful effect that **anti-inflammatory drugs** or **immunosuppressants** have:

- The immune system knows that blood vessels must not grow in the cornea and conjunctiva of the eye as they obstruct vision, and so the immune system causes an *inflammation* to call its defense army to that warzone to fight the awry cells.

- Clearly *you* don't want that either, that blood vessels grow in the cornea and conjunctiva of

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the eye, obstructing your vision or your dog's vision.

- But for reasons of habit and/or lack of education you see an *allopathic* vet or MD, and as you know *allopathic* physicians *love* to prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs, immunosuppressants, in the case of Pannus typically topical corticosteroids.

- Because, as our top *immunologist* in the uniquely helpful [Dog Expert Interview and Review Series](#) explains: "*immunosuppressants and antibiotics, that's all they've got, and so they gonna use that on everything.*"

- So now you have the situation that the immune system *rightfully and in your best interest* attempts to call its army of immune cells to destroy the awry cells, but at the
same time you pay(!) your allopathic vet or MD to *suppress* that call to duty!

- Hereby you *prevent* that the body's defense army can *restore* the health of your eyes or your dog's eyes.
- And you even *pay* for that.

How foolish is that?

Don't follow what you are being told, but *think for yourself*: How foolish is that?

Here (Pannus), the awry blood vessels will soon grow *further* and "happily" spread throughout the cornea and conjunctiva until you or the dog is blind, or maybe worse, they will grow into *other tissues*, quite possibly *in addition*.

By now the bank accounts of the allopathic vet or MD and pharma industry are filled to the brim,
but you or the dog is blind or worse. What's the point of that?

And why does Pannus lead to chronic inflammation if you rightfully refuse to use anti-inflammatory drugs?

Because the awry cells continue to form blood vessels in the cornea and/or conjunctiva of the eye, unless you address this awry blood vessel growth instead of the inflammation. Pannus is a progressive cardiovascular system disorder, NOT an "autoimmune disease" as so widely misdiagnosed, and in times of the internet copied.

Chronic inflammation and chronic pain is a common symptom of a progressive disorder.

But what's the cause?

That is the point, always!
Instead of spending billions of dollars and decades of time to develop ever more drugs that "cleverly" (?) *suppress* the immune system, allopathic medicine should have spent a *fraction* of that to understand and address the *cause* of the various body system *disorders* that plague and kill generations of people and dogs:

- *That* would help humanity.
- It just wouldn't help those medics' bank accounts and the bank accounts of the pharma industry.
- And *this* is why it hasn't been pursued.

Allopathic medicine is as simple as that. When you understand the above, you know exactly why it is *necessary* that you as medical consumer

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understand the **medical belief system** you are dealing with and paying for.

Back to Pannus itself. Being a **cardiovascular system disorder**, Pannus is *acquired* and typically starts to show around age three to five years. Once started it generally affects both eyes, it is a *progressive* disorder.

Pannus is *caused* by radiation damage, a chemical substance, a pathogen, or allergic reaction to vaccination, and *triggered* by nutritional deficiency.

Indeed, Pannus most commonly affects outdoor dogs that get too much ultraviolet radiation on unprotected eyes (like many GSDs), and indoor dogs of smoker households.

This may or may not suggest that the body starts to grow blood vessels in the cornea and/or

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conjunctiva of the eye as an attempt to nourish damaged cells.

Conversely, the increased incidence in certain breeds (like the GSD) does not suggest a genetic predisposition (which would make it an inherited defect, nothing else). Hugely helpful in this context: Inherited or Acquired?

Thus be wary of specious conclusions that a certain disease or disorder "is hereditary, is genetic". It's easy to see that it's a false conclusion: A disease or disorder never is genetic. A disease or disorder can only be acquired. Only a defect may be genetic.

Where the wording isn't clear, why would the diagnosis and the conclusion for treatment be?

All too often "it's genetic" is an excuse argument: "Excuse me, I don't understand the cause, and so I guess it's genetic".

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What's the problem with being told "it's genetic"?
The problem is that it gives many a false excuse that "nothing can be done!", while in fact a disease and disorder is *acquired* and thus can be *prevented* long after the baby or puppy is born.

After this helpful digression, on with non-infectious eye problems...

**Who Suffers Non-Infectious Eye Problems**

First remember that *Non-infectious* eye problems means these are eye problems *not* caused by a disease, because *infection* refers to disease-causing pathogens only.

You've seen that the above listed Non-infectious eye problems are *inherited defects* except for Ectropion, Entropion, and Cataract which all are
*acquired* defects, and except for Pannus which is an acquired *disorder* (contrary to what we read elsewhere).

Thus the latter four Non-infectious eye problems any dog can acquire, although the likelihood obviously is much higher for dogs that have a genetic code *weakened* by the inbreeding practices of reckless breeders. Among GSD breeders, too many are reckless: *they malformed even the dog's physical appearance*!

Fortunately, genetically German Shepherds are not predisposed to eye problems: none of the *inherited* defects is common among GSDs.

**Warning Signs**

- redness around one or both eyes
- redness directly on the cornea

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- pigmentation of the cornea
- redness in the conjunctiva
- abnormal eye lid
- abnormal lashes
- clouding of the eye lens
- enlarged pupil

Preventing Non-Infectious Eye Problems

To prevent the \textit{inherited} eye defects, all breeding dogs should be examined by a veterinary ophthalmologist prior to any breeding venture.

Some of the more responsible dog breeders register both dam and sire with the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) or a similar local

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They will receive a CERF number for each dog which clarifies the presence or absence of inherited defects of the eyes.

If ever you get a dog from a breeder, then in addition you should ask to see a copy of the paperwork that was submitted to CERF because the form may report on other health issues that may not deny the dog a CERF number but could be of interest to you nonetheless.

To prevent the *acquired* eye defects and Pannus, make sure you:

- avoid *injuries from dog fights* or roaming through the countryside when without *eye protection*

- avoid *unnecessary vaccinations*

- avoid antibiotics and steroids and other medications that can *cause facial paralysis*, like eg Doxycycline and Prednisone!

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• avoid radiation from x-rays or too much sun exposure when without eye protection

• avoid air pollutants like tobacco smoke, room "refreshers", or spraying deodorant or perfume near your dog

• avoid excessive stress

• and of course avoid nutritional deficiencies and intoxication.

Treating Non-Infectious Eye Problems

The first and most important treatment of any eye inflammation is to ensure proper lubrication and nourishment of the eye.

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As for proper lubrication, do not use those "Artificial Tears" products, which will dry out the eyes over time.

Best would be simple standard saline solution (0.9% sodium chloride in purified water), but you can't re-apply that every 5 to 10 minutes as would be needed. So then the next best solution is to use the self-activating and long-lasting i-drop which may be sufficient even if used just once a day.

Proper nourishment starts with providing lots and lots of drinking water, and ends with the many nutrients that are only in REAL foods, not in incinerated industrial waste products.

In some cases this treatment alone may already be enough to cure Ectropion, Entropion, Cataract, and Pannus, and to relieve the symptoms of Macroblepharon and Persistent Pupillary Membranes.

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In other cases - and always for Distichiasis and Retinal Dysplasia - only specific treatment by a veterinary ophthalmologist may help to relieve some of the symptoms, and cure may be impossible (in particular in case of Distichiasis, Macroblepharon, Progressive Retinal Atrophy, and Retinal Dysplasia).

Be aware that even though an inflammation is not always painful, any loss of eyesight is very irritating and so may cause a lot of stress for the dog, which may lead to seemingly unrelated health issues and/or behavior issues.

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Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a disorder describing the condition of excessive and frequent evacuation of mostly liquid feces.

The reason why the feces are mostly liquid is that in a Diarrhea situation a disorder

- prevents the orderly metabolism of foods (for example breakdown of fats) and/or

- leads to excess water being absorbed into the feces matter.

In both cases, the frequent evacuation results from the organism trying to expel irritants, allergens, or pathogens, and it quickly leads to dehydration.

Normally, feces consist of about 75% water and 25% solids: mostly dead bacteria and indigestible

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food matter such as cellulose, but also minor amounts of cell debris, bile pigments and died leukocytes (white blood cells). Conversely, in a Diarrhea situation feces can be as much as 98% water, hence the big risk of dehydration.

Diarrhea typically is triggered by a Digestive Disorder, which itself may be triggered or caused by:

- Medicaments, in particular:
  - *antacids*, the all too commonly used drugs to relieve the *symptoms* of acid reflux, heartburn or indigestion
  - *antibiotics*
  - cancer drugs.
- *Microbes*, in particular:

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• pathogenic bacteria - typical here are salmonella, E(scherichia) coli or shigella, and campylobacter (very common in chicken)

• viruses - like CHV (canine herpes virus), the leading cause of death in young puppies!

• parasites - like Giardia, Crypto(sporidium), Toxoplasma gondii (all protozoa), or hemoparasites (bacteria that infect the blood)

• Lactose intolerance:

  • dogs, like people, do not normally produce lactase after weaning (lactase persistence is a recessive inherited gene defect)

  • and so most dogs cannot metabolize lactose (the prime sugar in milk products)

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and they may suffer Diarrhea or other conditions after consuming certain foods.

- Fructose or artificial sweeteners like Sorbitol.

- Something ingested:
  - industrial and even boutique commercial pet food may contain one or more of the above, and/or impurities, pollutants, contaminants, allergens, and even toxins - all of which can cause Diarrhea
  - raw food (real raw food, not the many commercial brands that claim to sell "raw food") may contain one or more types of the pathogenic microbes listed above, because the lack of prolonged incineration lets the naturally occurring microbes in raw food thrive until it gets eaten - which too can cause Diarrhea (and much worse)

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or the dog may have scavenged outdoors or indoors a substance that the dog's metabolism is \textit{not used to} digest, and so the organism responds with Diarrhea to expel the irritating matter.

- **Related conditions**, such as Crohn's disorder \textit{(Crohn's disease is another misleading naming in allopathic medicine)} and Ulcerative Colitis, IBS \textit{(Irritable Bowel Syndrome)}, Celiac disorder \textit{(Celiac disease is another misleading naming in allopathic medicine)}, and even Hyperthyroidism and Hypothyroidism.

So, be aware that again, Diarrhea is nothing but the \textit{name} of a \textit{symptom}. Unless the physician analyses the \textit{cause} of this condition, no amount of medicaments is going to provide \textit{cure}, every drug will merely \textit{suppress or palliate the symptoms}, and so the Diarrhea may pause or

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stop but the organism will soon show its sickness through other symptoms.

While we people can just run to the toilet each time we feel pressure on the anal muscles, your dog may have to wait for you to be taken outside for a quick walk to relieve. Therefore this is the one situation where complete Dog House Training may lead to a problem:

A fully house-trained dog is trained to hold on until the dog has reached the "relieve location" taught during the toilet training part of complete House Training. This training aspect now puts huge stress on the dog in a Diarrhea situation - imagine you were declined to visit the toilet when you have Diarrhea!

Hence why I always suggest to provide for an outdoor or indoor dog potty for such emergencies, even when you have a fully house-
trained dog. Then it will only be used in emergencies anyway.

**Who Suffers Diarrhea**

While dogs (yet) not commonly receive *antacids* (the frequently used drugs to relieve the *symptoms* of acid reflux, heartburn or indigestion), dogs commonly receive prescriptions of *antibiotics*.

Even worse, in our modern food chain *meat* is loaded with *antibiotics* and *steroids*! Thus the higher the declared "meat" content in the "pet food" that you may have been buying for your dog, the more *antibiotics* your dog will have received, even without any prescription.

Because if there's any *real meat* in an industrial "pet food" packet (instead of the typically *grinded bones*) then for cost reasons it is *the most*.

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contaminated meat: the meat that is not eligible for human consumption.

Now that you know where the antibiotics come from that may cause the Diarrhea, in case of pathogenic microbes being the cause the pathogens come from:

- spoiled food (scavenged)
- contaminated water (puddles)
- sniffing or even licking the anus or genital of a sick dog, or excrements.

As for drinking water, if you live in an area with tap water impurities (this is a water tester) then the water for the dog may need to be filtered too (a Brita filter can do). For outdoor water bowls, make sure foliage doesn't spoil it. And never give your dog sparkling mineral water, not even the

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mild form, because dogs cannot metabolize the gas.

Additional but comparatively rare causes of Diarrhea are:

- stress (whether stress from the Pack conflict or from Separation Anxiety)

- abrupt change in diet (always introduce new foods incrementally)

- feeding convenience food table scraps or snacks (these are full of sugar, fat, grain, salt, spices, chemical emulsifiers, color and flavor additives, preservatives, etc).

**Warning Signs**

- very soft to liquid stool

- different smell of stool

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• signs of **dehydration** (sunken eyes, slow capillary refill time in the gums, lethargy, general malaise)

• **severe if nausea** (balancing problems, wobbly walk)

• possibly signs of abdominal pain and/or cramps

• in some cases concomitant **vomiting** and/or **bloat**

• rarely fever (for dogs a *rectal* body temperature of and above 39.2°C / 102.6°F), then sign of **infection**

• rarely blood in the stool, then sign of
  • **hookworm infestation**
  • or other aggressive **pathogens**

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Preventing Diarrhea

As the most common causes of Diarrhea are medicaments, microbes, and something ingested, the easiest way to prevent Diarrhea is:

- Aim to prevent superfluous medicaments, foremost steroid and antibiotic blanket treatments greedily prescribed merely to suppress or palliate some symptoms without even bothering to identify the cause of the condition!

- Aim to prevent needless or excessive exposure to pathogens (untended dog parks, vicinity of bins or garbage disposals, in and around vet practices and animal clinics)

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Aim to prevent scavenging and industrial pet "food".

Serve two or even three smaller meals during the day, not one large meal. Do not make abrupt changes to your dog's diet, introduce any new foods incrementally (replacing a quarter per day is fine).

Provide steamed rice at the very least twice a week: besides its nutrients, rice has a cleansing effect on the intestines. Quinoa is a great but more costly alternative.

Use either the most effective Eat-Slow bowl or even healthier an effective stainless steel Eat-Slow bowl to improve the dog's digestion and overall behavior.

Aim to serve all food and drink at a temperature between room temperature and dog body temperature. Try to serve foods at roughly the
same temperature each time, not sometimes hot and other times cold. All common sense really. If you have a generally nervous dog (signs are aggression, frequent barking, pacing around, trembling, or twitching) then also prevent stress:

- stress from the Pack conflict
- stress from Separation Anxiety
- and stress from fear.

**Treating Diarrhea**

Be aware that most cases of Diarrhea are self-limiting and self-healing within a couple of days without any treatment because Diarrhea is a way for the body to expel irritants.

As always, but contrary to the all too common practice, treatment of Diarrhea should only begin...
after the cause has been identified! Else you pay for merely suppressing or palliating the most apparent symptom at the time - and so soon for ever more symptoms.

If your chosen vet doesn't bother to identify the cause of the Diarrhea - and yet you resist to swap the vet (?) for a quality veterinarian - you may want to identify the cause yourself.

How can you attempt to identify the cause yourself?

Often this is easy by combining an observation with basic common sense. For example, as it relates to the three key causes of Diarrhea:

- If the dog is on the first two or three administrations of a medicament, and nothing much else changed, likely the medicament causes the Diarrhea.
• If you saw that the dog was scavenging at some trash place, and nothing much else changed, likely a pathogenic microbe causes the Diarrhea.

• If neither of the above is the case, likely the dog ingested something unsuitable or unusual, which may not cause an infection (because there is no microbe involved: eg with industrial "pet food" the three hours long incineration kills off all microbes) but disturbs the digestive system nonetheless, such that it tries to expel the offensive substance.

Other times we may have missed a critical observation and so all common sense is in vain. Then is only left to look closely at the dog's present behavior. Often this will allow to rule out an infection, eg:

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• **sudden** Diarrhea without any behavioral signs before and after

• **before** the Diarrhea the dog's behavior suggested sickness (sudden pacing around, nervousness, or lethargy), but **after** the Diarrhea the dog quickly shows relief and behaves normal.

Conversely, if **after** the Diarrhea the dog's behavior *continues* to be unusual or worsens (eg increased or more frequent episodes of nervousness), or if **other symptoms** follow (skin conditions, continued lethargy, *increased* or *reduced* demand to eat or drink) - in addition to the Diarrhea or replacing it - then the underlying **Digestive Disorder** likely involves a serious infection from some **pathogenic** microbe, and it would be wise to **end** the DIY diagnosis at this point and seek a **quality veterinarian** who is eager to **first identify** the **cause**.

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For this, a quality veterinarian will prescribe a complete blood count rather than a stool test, because a single stool test rarely identifies the cause and so typically is a waste of money: multiple bowel movements produce different results, and many pathogens are able to hold on inside the bowel for quite some time.

If instead your vet suggests a stool test and subsequently a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, then clearly you are still stuck with a greedy ordinary allopathic vet: those procedures are costly.

If after the diagnosis of the cause your vet aims to prescribe antibiotic treatment, then again clearly you are still stuck with an ordinary allopathic vet even if the cause has been identified as bacterial infection: Antibiotics must never be provided for conditions of the digestive tract.

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system because of what antibiotics cause to the digestive system!

Sensible treatment of Diarrhea will target the cause of Diarrhea:

If the cause was found to be a medicament then the worst (but common practice) is to treat the Diarrhea with a second medicament. While that may resolve the Diarrhea, think:

The first medicament caused Diarrhea (and likely further "side effects"), thus already the first medicament made the dog sick, and the body shows its sickness through symptoms, Diarrhea being one of them. How foolish is it then to try to treat a mere symptom caused by the first medicament with yet another medicament?

And where will this chain reaction end? When the bank account is empty, or when the dog succumbed to sickness?

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Thus instead I would strongly suggest to thoroughly consider how sensible the first medicament is, and what other means of treatment may work towards the same goal?

While temporary Diarrhea is no reason to stop say a cancer drug if its benefits outweigh all its damage(?), be aware that even in the case of cancer the drug isn't the most sensible and certainly not the only treatment option.

If you can safely avoid the first medicament that was found to cause Diarrhea, you will not need any treatment at all.

Next, if the cause was found to be a microbe then what microbe was found? An otherwise healthy dog can very well cope with bacteria in the digestive system, thus paying for antibiotic

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treatment does not only do harm but is useless too: it doesn't provide benefit, only damage.

Conversely worms, viruses, and protozoa can pose a real threat if they reached the intestines and proliferate there, and so caused the Diarrhea. But antibiotics do nothing against worms, viruses, and protozoa anyway.

While there are effective over-the-counter drugs for all types of worms including hookworm, if the cause was found to be a virus or protozoan you'll need a quality veterinarian to achieve cure, not treatment of symptoms.

Finally, if the cause was found to be something ingested that doesn't involve pathogenic microbes then no treatment is indicated but rest instead.

Be aware that when allopathic vets come to this diagnosis they cannot charge you anything

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beyond the basic consultation fee, and so the standard allopathic treatment protocol in this case is to talk you into an abdominal x-ray "to rule out any obstruction".

But let's face it: If there were an intestinal obstruction that the dog's body systems can't deal with (say intense retching, or intense defecating, like in Diarrhea!) then the dog wouldn't have made it to the vet anyway.

Yes, there is a remote chance but it's hardly bigger than the chance that your dog (or you) take a walk and get hit by an airplane engine falling from the sky. So forget about it, and certainly don't pay for that.

**Some general closing comments**

- Don't give food during the first day of Diarrhea, because you don't want to congest
or irritate a struggling digestive system with more food matter. Allow it to empty itself entirely, so that all body systems can focus on healing rather than on metabolizing more food. Remember that the Diarrhea is merely a symptom, and just one of them.

- Always provide plenty of fresh water. And if the Diarrhea extends to a second day, either add the recommended dosage of electrolytes or better even, prepare a rehydration solution like this in order to replenish essential micronutrients:
  
  - half a liter (17oz) spring water or non-carbonated mineral water
  
  - the juice of one small cucumber
  
  - the juice of an orange, lime, lemon, or any melon (whatever you have)

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• half a teaspoon of some quality sea salt
• a tablespoon of some quality honey.
• Stir until pretty much dissolved, then serve at room temperature and motivate your dog to drink it. Three times a day is the minimum.

• Do not even think to give your dog (or your child or to take yourself) a commercial electrolyte or "energy" drink: Pedialyte, Gatorade, Redbull & Co are known to be loaded with synthetic additives and even carcinogens. Sorry to put things straight, they are neither good for people nor for dogs.

• When you reintroduce food on the second day of Diarrhea, start with:
  • a third rice

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• a third carrots

• and a third chicken or lamb.

• All steamed and cooled before serving, together with plenty of fresh water or with the above rehydration solution.

• By all means, serve two or three smaller meals during the day, not one large meal.

• If by the end of day two the dog's Diarrhea condition has not significantly improved, you should take your dog to a quality vet early morning on day three.

Make sure to avoid industrial "dog food" for at least a full week after the Diarrhea has ended, even if normally you can't resist their marketing: A digestive system that is only just recovering must not immediately be harmed with the many toxins in industrial "dog food". If later you wish to

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change the diet, introduce any new foods incrementally (replacing a quarter per day is fine).

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Degenerative Myelopathy

Degenerative Myelopathy (Degeneration of the Spinal Cord, DM) is an inherited defect of the immune system where the immune system attacks the dog's central nervous system. This attack leads to a loss of insulation around the nerve fibers (myelin) and of nerve fibers (axons). Once the nerves in the spinal cord are destroyed, the dog can no longer walk because, without nerve connections, muscles cannot work. The control pathways that make muscles work are located all throughout the spinal cord.

DM is an insidious disease, the symptoms of which rarely show up before the age of 5, and possibly as late as 14 years. The early stages of DM start with an almost imperceptible weakness in the hindquarters. In the last stage, the dog can

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no longer walk or even hold its balance when standing or squatting to defecate.

However, DM itself is not painful. There is zero pain because the nerve cells have died. The dog no longer feels its legs.

**Who Suffers Degenerative Myelopathy**

German Shepherds are the breed that is most susceptible to Degenerative Myelopathy. Between 1 to 3% of German Shepherds are affected. In the USA alone, each year between 14,000 to 42,000 GSDs are diagnosed with DM.

Since DM is hereditary, this means that GSD breeders have not yet taken enough care to avoid breeding affected parents. This reinforces the importance of finding the best German Shepherd breeders when you select your next GSD.

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However, as with most hereditary diseases, both the outbreak of DM and its progression seem to be triggered by environmental intoxication. This means that you can indeed delay the outbreak of DM and slow down or even stop its progression if you provide the right living environment for your German Shepherd.

**Warning Signs**

Recently the most important risk factor of DM, the defective gene, has been identified. It is recessive, which means both parents, the dam and the sire, must carry the defective gene for the puppies to develop DM later in their lives. A simple saliva-based genetic test was developed which can help determine the risk that a certain dog may contract DM later in its life.

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This test costs only 65 USD. It is of course more relevant to GSD breeders who try their best to use breeding dogs without hereditary ailments, however you too might wish to know whether your German Shepherd carries the defective A/A gene combination. In that case note that even a dog that carries the defective gene combination will not necessarily develop the symptoms of DM before it dies, because this depends on environmental factors too.

During early stage DM, occasionally you can hear the sound of your dog's rear feet nails scraping on the pavement during walking. Your dog will begin to show some difficulty getting up. If the dog is standing, it may have difficulty balancing, but it can recover on its own. If you turn your dog's toes under, it may still be able to right its foot pad down, but response time could be lengthened.

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As DM progresses, difficulty getting up and rear feet nail scraping will increase. The rear legs will cross under your dog's body since it is losing sensation in its hindquarters - it does not know where it has actually placed its feet. Faulty perception of foot placement leads to tripping and stumbling.

When your dog is in a standing position, if you move the dog from side to side, using your hands, the dog will lose its balance and topple over. Often, you will notice exaggerated movements, such as high stepping when going up a curb. If you turn your dog's toes under, your dog will no longer place its foot in the proper pad-down position once it can no longer feel its feet.

Soon, the tail will rarely become active and wag, however, because of the length of the German Shepherd tail it can become tangled with the hind legs.

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Ultimately, you will need to help a DM-suffering German Shepherd to walk at all. Up until the terminal phase, DM can take several years but ultimately the sense of feeling is completely lost, and the dog then loses control over bowel and bladder too.

Preventing Degenerative Myelopathy

Although there is still no cure for DM or medication that would replace lost myelin and repair damaged axons, recent research has brought quite dramatic changes to the life expectancy and quality of life of dogs with DM. All these improvements are centered around the goal to provide the dog with a living environment that will at least delay, and possibly prevent, the outbreak or progression of DM.

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Treating Degenerative Myelopathy

Treatment of a German Shepherd with the defective gene combination should ideally start before the first symptoms become visible. In this case, in fact we are talking about avoidance measures - which may be successful to differing degrees.

Today's recommended treatment of DM combines four components:

- Exercise
- Diet
- Medication
- Other supportive measures

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Exercise: The more varied the exercise is that you provide to your dog, the more you stimulate its various brain functions, nerve fibres and muscles throughout its entire body. Research shows that exercise and diet have the biggest impact when we try to delay or even to prevent the outbreak of DM. The exercise program should comprise weekly swimming and extensive walks but should give your dog a resting day between days of heavy workout to allow strained muscles and tendons to heal and to increase the build up of muscle strength.

In case you didn't provide your German Shepherd with much exercise in the past, you should slowly increase the schedule of alternative day exercise over the period of a month until your dog is fit. Also, if your GSD is already affected by DM, you may need to help your dog to get out of the water if it can no longer negotiate the bank on its own.

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Important is varied exercise. Should your German Shepherd then at some point contract DM, it is optimally prepared to substitute various body functions with others that are not yet affected.

Diet: We now know that the right diet also has a major impact on the outbreak and progression of DM. To give a dog the right diet is a key part of controlling environmental intoxication - which seems to trigger DM (and probably many other hereditary diseases too).

This is another reason why we are against processed, industrial dog food and why we stress so much the importance of healthy dog meals, regular meal times, and a consistent feeding routine on MYGERMANSHEPHERD.org. In particular German Shepherds with their sensitive digestion need the right diet in order to be healthy and happy. Only a healthy and happy dog can behave in a way that makes you happy too.

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We cannot go into details here what the right diet for the German Shepherd is, but our MYGERMANSHEPHERD PERIODICAL will regularly feature this topic too.

Medication: Recently, two medications have been identified that seem to prevent progression or even result in remission of DM in up to 80% of affected dogs. These medications are aminocaproic acid (EACA) and n-acetylcysteine (NAC). For both substances exist cheap generic products, and they can also be compounded in a local pharmacy.

Both substances should be given orally - diluted with chicken broth (or other compatible substitute). Side effects can be Gastroenteritis (see 5), Vomiting (see 29), and increased bleeding time.

Other supportive measures: Since DM is an immune system defect attacking the nervous
system, you must avoid standard heartworm medication (see 24) and flea medication (see 19) etc that increases immune responsiveness.

Stress reduction: For example, even minor invasive surgical procedures showed a marked increase in the progression of DM. Dental work can be most problematic.

Physical aids: If your German Shepherd is already severely affected by DM such that it can no longer use its hind legs properly, the Bottoms-up Leash or better the Walkabout Rear Harness or the Walkin Lift Harness should be a suitable physical aid. At a later stage, the best dog wheelchair may be useful too. Once your dog cannot walk at all, the only way to provide it with mobility may be the customized quad cart.

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Heart Muscle Disease

Restrict this to Heartworm!

Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) is an ailment of the heart muscle. It's thought to be hereditary, however nutritional deficiencies of taurine or carnitine seem to contribute to the outbreak. Both the right and left chambers of the heart grow due to a genetic disorder, however one side can be more severely affected than the other.

When the left chamber grows, its ability to pump blood out into the lungs and body deteriorates, and fluid begins to accumulate in the lungs. In addition, the heart muscle soon becomes overloaded. This often leads to Congestive Heart Failure (CHF).

Subaortic Stenosis (SAS) is another ailment of the heart muscle. SAS is hereditary. With this condition, the heart narrows in the area of the

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aortic valve. The narrowing means that the left chamber must pump extra hard to get the correct blood volume through the narrowed area. This leads to a typical heart murmur sound that is one of the warning signs indicating that your dog may have SAS.

Note the difference: While DCM may develop during the dog's life, a dog either has SAS already as a puppy or it will never contract SAS.

A third heart muscle disease is common only in certain regions because it is inflicted by a parasite, the heartworm, which is spread by mosquitoes. The heartworm causes eg blocked bloodflow - primarily in the heart, lung, and liver.

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**Who Suffers Heart Muscle Disease**

DCM is not particularly common in the German Shepherd dog breed (the Doberman is most susceptible). However, the likelihood of contracting DCM increases with age, and usually dogs show the first signs of this ailment between age 4 and 11. Male dogs are more susceptible to the disease than female dogs.

SAS unfortunately is common with German Shepherds. Dogs that are born with SAS rarely survive beyond age 3 if untreated.

Heartworm-induced heart muscle disease is common in warm and humid regions where there are many mosquitoes. However, in areas with heavy heartworm infestation up to half of all dogs have become immune. This means, although the dogs still contract the heartworm, their self-

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defense mechanism prevents a spread and outbreak of the disease.

**Warning Signs**

The warning signs of DCM are lethargy, little interest in eating food, shortness of breath, coughing, abdominal distension, pale gums, increased heart rate, fainting, stumbling, or collapse. The dog's breathing sound may also have a muffled or crackling sound due to the presence of fluid in the lungs.

Diagnosis of DCM is through physical tests, X-rays and ultrasound using echocardiograph imaging.

The first warning sign of SAS is the typical heart murmur sound that usually indicates SAS if the puppy is at least 6 months old and the heart murmur remains. The murmur is best heard on the left side of the chest at the level of the base.

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of the heart, however it is famous for radiating its sound up the carotid arteries of the neck. The louder the murmur, the worse the obstruction of the aortic valve. Other warning signs are a dry cough that gets worse when the puppy is resting, lack of energy to play, and general lethargy with increased breathing while at rest.

Only ultrasound checks offer a reliable diagnosis of SAS.

The early warning signs of the heartworm-inflicted heart muscle disease are coughing, shortness of breath, fainting after exercise, tiring easily, loss of appetite, and nervousness. Diagnosis of the heartworm infection is through blood samples.

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Preventing Heart Muscle Disease

To help avoid DCM in your German Shepherd, stick to two or three regular, healthy and varied dog meals during the day, and provide regular, frequent and varied exercise. Avoid Obesity (see 25). You can also seek to prevent the triggering nutritional deficiencies of taurine and carnitine by giving your dog a suitable food supplement. Both Acetyl-L Carnitine and Taurine are available in pure powder form as natural supplements suitable for both human and canine.

Treating Heart Muscle Disease

Treatment of DCM is focusing on improving the heart's function and to control the accumulation of fluid in the lungs through administering daily drugs. Again, Acetyl-L Carnitine and Taurine can serve the first aim, while fluid in the lungs

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(pulmonary congestion or pulmonary edema) should be treated and observed by a vet - who will (hopefully) start treatment by prescribing a natural diuretic (fluid reducer) similar to Aquadrene. Pulmonary congestion is indicated by a dry, hacking coughing at night.

Why the difference in suggested treatment (the nutritional deficiencies treated by yourself, the pulmonary congestion treated and monitored by the vet)? Because the dog's metabolism (and our own) would simply excrete any excess carnitine and taurine with the urine. Conversely, a diuretic withdraws together with the fluid essential electrolytes from the body, the extent and impact of which must be monitored by a vet. Even Aquadrene only replaces some of those essential electrolytes.

Why can we not simply replace the electrolytes lost through the administration of a diuretic with

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commercially available electrolytes? Because the amount and variety of the loss of electrolytes through the administration of a diuretic may be very different to the loss of electrolytes as a consequence of Dehydration (see 1), Diarrhea (see 22), or Vomiting (see 29).

Finally, Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) as a common consequence of DCM can meanwhile fairly successfully be treated with the drug Pimobendan. However, as we would expect, its side effects can be severe.

Unfortunately, if the specific circumstances of a dog with DCM make the dog not responsive to the treatment with carnitine and especially taurine, then the dog's life expectancy may be as short as 6 months and is rarely more than two years from the outbreak of DCM. Luckily, as mentioned before, DCM is not particularly common among German Shepherds.

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SAS cannot be avoided since it is present at birth. Treatment of SAS is focusing on creating a normal exercise tolerance to provide a normal life for as long as the dog lives. Drug treatment involves beta blockers like Atenolol that keep the heart from racing, however the side effects can be severe. An alternative treatment is surgery. Unfortunately, either treatment rarely extends the life of the dog beyond age 5. In other words, if SAS is treated, it may extend the lifespan of your dog by 2 years.

Heartworm-inflicted heart muscle disease theoretically can safely be avoided, however in practice this may be more difficult if you live in a warm and humid region where mosquitoes are present all year round. Helpful (but not safe) remedies are:

Keep your German Shepherd indoors during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
Consider getting Bug-off screens for your windows and doors.

Every other day, add two raw garlic cloves to your dog's meal.

Spray your dog's coat with Repel Eucalyptus Insect Repellent if it works in your geography - Note that no insect repellent is equally effective on insects in every geography, since the mutations of insects differ widely between different geographies!

If you spray your dog's coat with an insect repellent that is not as natural as Repel (note that Repel is not entirely natural - 70% of the active ingredient is a biochemical pesticide), be aware of damaging side effects of substances like Cholinesterase inhibitors in standard insecticides. Even products containing the most used insect repellent, DEET, are not as safe as Repel.

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Eucalyptus Insect Repellent (however, some of them last longer).

Get the Thermacell Mosquito Repellent for walks with your dog, playtime in the garden, or sitting on the patio - Note that this type of repellent reportedly works on many more mutations of say mosquitoes etc. Allegedly this is the best one can do to fight mosquitoes - but it is more expensive too.

You could also consider getting one or two of those Zap Rackets if you enjoy the added exercise.

Consider treating your dog monthly with K9 Advantix, which repels and kills mosquitoes, ticks, fleas etc, and is the most effective combination of biochemical pesticides on the market - with minimal reported side effects. However, note that if such preventive medication is given to a dog that is already infected, a mild to severe allergic

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reaction may occur (which is why medication with such powerful toxins normally is a prescription product!).

Have your GSD checked twice yearly by a vet for Heartworm-inflicted heart muscle disease.

A strong metabolism certainly can limit the effects of any disease. Hence regular exercise and healthy dog meals, regular feeding times, and a consistent feeding routine will contribute their part too (see House training a dog)

Also note that all drugs that you give to your German Shepherd over its lifetime weaken its ability to self-heal! The dog's body (and the human body even more so) have a tremendous ability to self-heal - but only if we let it! Instead, if we interfere, we automatically reduce this capability. All too often, the use of one drug today will require the use of another drug tomorrow - each drug inducing side effects that are likely to

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amplify over time - leading to further ailments and higher vet costs.

Beware of Ivermectin-based heartworm medicine such as Heartgard, Iverhart, Tri-Heart etc. Note that 65% of all reported dog drug reactions and 48% of all reported deaths are caused by heartworm medicine!

Treatment for heartworm disease is available, but costly and potentially dangerous. Treatment involves a series of injections to kill the adult worms. During this time the dog must be kept very quiet, as even minimal exercise may result in serious problems from the dead and dying worms. Once the adult worms are destroyed, the immature worms in the bloodstream must be killed too - unless the dog is receiving monthly heartworm preventives like K9 Advantix, which typically eliminate the immature worms after a few treatments.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Obesity

Obesity is a disorder describing the condition of fat reserves unorderly growing around organs such that the cardiovascular system cannot adequately fulfil its role.

Thus note that Obesity is not a disease, and also looking fat is not a necessity: even a thin-looking dog (or person) may suffer the disorder Obesity if fat reserves unorderly grow in visceral tissue.

Much like for people, the seemingly inoffensive Obesity is one of the most serious health problems that dogs get. Just recently, one in three dogs was found to be overweight or obese. Over 20 health conditions have been linked to being overweight (including Pancreatitis), yet all are preventable.

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If you serve your German Shepherd too much food per dog meal or unbalanced nutrition, or you don't provide a stringent regular exercise regime, your dog will become obese at some point. If your dog remains obese for months (or even years), it will start having trouble with basic exercise, develop breathing problems, and in the long term may suffer from Pancreatitis (see 5), Diabetes (see 28), Heart disease (see 24), Kidney failure (see 30), or any other organ failure.

Who suffers from Obesity

Obesity is caused by eating too much and exercising too little. There are however additional ailments that can cause Obesity (as you see in this Health Manual), so it is good to see a vet if your dog is having any trouble losing weight.

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Luckily, German Shepherds rather rarely get obese anyway - probably because they are such an active breed with a strong metabolism. You will know that, even if you keep your GSD in your house, your dog is - at a minimum - running around as much as you allow. Indeed, German Shepherds get sick and develop behavior problems if they don't get demanding outdoor exercise each day.

**Warning Signs**

Early warning signs of Obesity are:

- Shortness of breath - exceeding 10 minutes after exercise ended, even when lying down
- Slow to get up - without the existence of a physical ailment, and before 10 years of age
- General listlessness and lethargy

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
• Your German Shepherd dog training is based on treats rather than praise

• You serve a bowl full of industry dog food - when you find the time

• Your puppy house training or dog house training didn't cover the important topic of dog meals, meal times, and feeding routine

Note that although the physical appearance of your German Shepherd, or reading scales and comparing it to standards, may provide an indication whether your dog is obese, from a medical perspective Obesity is an out-of-balance set of factors of the metabolism and organs. In other words, to your eyes your GSD may not look obese, nonetheless your dog may be obese in a medical sense (and vice versa).

That's why a vet won't just look at your dog, or compare scale readings, but they will examine

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your dog and consider factors like blood pressure and constitution, heart rate at rest and under load, dog meals, meal times, and feeding routine, exercise regime, living environment, etc.

Also note that even if you serve your German Shepherd only 1% more calories than it needs for your exercise regime, it can suffer from Obesity within less than a year.

**Preventing Obesity**

The easiest way to avoid Obesity is that you serve your dog two or three smaller, varied and healthy dog meals a day, either in the best Eat-Slow bowl or in the best metal Eat-Slow bowl, at regular meal times and with a consistent feeding routine, that you always provide a bowl of fresh water, and that your German Shepherd will get its fair amount and variety of outdoor exercise each day.

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If ever you wish a second opinion see here
Never feed your GSD table scraps, and don't let it scavenge.

Weigh your German Shepherd on a monthly basis, and put the weight in relation to your exercise regime and its changes.

By all means, don't make giving treats a daily routine. Rather consider dog treats like human presents. How often will you give the same person a present? Don't compare dog treats with our human tendency to consume snacks during the day (or even during the night).

Dog treats are neither a nutritional substitute for an out-of-balance diet (as the dog food industry tries to convey) nor a sign of the love or affection you feel towards your German Shepherd (as they try to convey too). If you really want to provide balanced nutrition and show your love or affection towards your German Shepherd, stick to home-made dog meals at regular meal times with a quality vet but it is more helpful than the average ordinary vet that you pay year after year!

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consistent feeding routine (see House Training a Dog).

The later you introduce your GSD to getting treats, the healthier for your dog (1), the easier your German Shepherd obedience training (2), and the more unlikely that you will face German Shepherd behavior problems (3). In fact, in every regard, treats can be entirely substituted with praise, patting, and real-life rewards - an action your dog desires, see Dog Clicker Training.

Real-life rewards are for example to let your dog sniff on the ground for as long as it wants to sniff (sniffing the ground is a genetic dog behavior that you should never try to suppress), to provide your dog with extended outdoor exercise, to involve your dog in games like catch, fetch, jump etc, to let your dog out for an immediate walk, to let your dog run off-leash in safe areas (crucial for health and behavior), to provide a comfy place

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near you in addition to its crate place (see Crate training dogs), etc.

**Treating Obesity**

Likewise, the easiest way to treat an existing condition of Obesity is to reintroduce the advice given above. Do not give drugs against Obesity, unless the above hasn't worked within 6 months (which will very rarely be the case!) and your vet recommends the drugs.

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Bladder Infection

Bladder Infection (Cystitis) or Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) usually means that harmful bacteria found their way from outside the urinary opening into the bladder (and soon thereafter to the kidneys, see 30), and these are now bringing the bladder's function out of balance. Other sources of Bladder Infection are ingesting stale food or infested water, or stones or a tumor in the bladder.

Who Suffers Bladder Infections

All dogs can get several Bladder Infections during their lifetime if you don't make use of the avoidance measures below. However, generally female dogs are far more susceptible to Bladder Infections than male dogs, older dogs more than...
younger ones, and unaltered dogs more than (clean!) neutered or spayed dogs. In addition, the later you have your dog neutered or spayed, the more susceptible it is to Bladder Infections (and other ailments too).

There seems to be no evidence for a German Shepherd susceptibility to Bladder Infections. The many reported cases of German Shepherd Bladder Infections seem simply be due to the fact that there are so many German Shepherds, compared to other breeds.

**Warning Signs**

Typical warning signs of a Bladder Infection are:

- Sudden excessive water consumption (same weather and exercise level)

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• Strain when urinating and/or urinating only small amounts at a time

• Urinating at unusual times or with unusual frequency (more often or less often)

• Urinating in inappropriate places

• Loss of appetite

• Fatigue, listlessness, and lethargy

• Fever

• Foul smelling urine

• Blood in the urine

• Tender lower stomach area

If you notice several concurrent symptoms of these, make a vet appointment. If your German Shepherd seems to lose the ability to relieve itself,

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you must make an emergency visit to the vet, or your dog could die within hours!

**Preventing Bladder Infections**

The following measures can help to avoid Bladder Infections:

Make sure that your German Shepherd is drinking ample amounts of fresh water each day

Take your dog out to urinate after a maximum of three hours (a puppy until 6 months of age after 60 minutes) to prevent the build-up of bacteria in its bladder - at night, when the metabolism is down, after a maximum of six hours can be sufficient

Allow your German Shepherd at least 2 to 3 hours demanding and varied outdoor exercise each day - this will also help to stimulate the bladder

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Avoid that your dog is wading through or even swimming in standing waters that may be infested with bacteria - even a slow-flowing river is safer than a pond

Take your German Shepherd under an outdoor shower after each exercise, play, or walk in the countryside, after swimming, etc - as a rule, if any fluid or substance reached the lowest body opening, a more intensive shower is required

Use a ph-neutral, natural dog shampoo, and carefully apply this with rhythmic movements (sparing all body openings incl. the eyes and ears)

At the end, clean the bladder exit (and also the anal area, but with a separate washcloth), and finally apply a strong antiseptic spray around both body exits, using a new piece of washcloth each time

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Don't bathe your German Shepherd too often - between monthly and twice yearly is plenty - better use the outdoor shower and a natural dog shampoo instead.

Both to avoid and to treat Bladder Infections you can try cranberry extract in powder form to help prevent bacteria buildup in the urinary tract.

Note that even if you adhere to all these avoidance measures, there is no 100% safety to avoid Bladder Infections altogether. However, number 1 and 2 alone seem to avoid over 90% of all conditions of Bladder Infections, so ensure that you follow at least the first two.

**Treating Bladder Infections**

To treat a Bladder Infection, you should initially visit a vet so that they diagnose the ailment and its likely cause. They will probably argue in favor of...
of using antibiotics (read the Introductory Notes 5 and 7 to understand why). However, because of the low success rate of antibiotics to treat Bladder Infections and their severe long-term side effects, you should aim for an alternative treatment instead. In addition, the mentioned cranberry extract in powder form seems to help better anyway.

Note that an otherwise healthy German Shepherd certainly has the ability to self-heal a Bladder Infection - provided that you give the right, natural assistance as described above. Antibiotics and other drugs seem inappropriate to treat Bladder Infections.

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Soft Tissue Trauma

Soft Tissue Trauma (Soft Tissue Damage) is

Dogs can get injured just as easily, if not more so, than we do. They get wound up, they play around, and they ultimately get injured because of that excitement - if you're not careful. Soft tissue includes the muscles, tendons, cartilage, and ligaments surrounding the joints and bones, and this can be injured in any number of ways - through tweaks to the legs, running into objects or being hit by moving objects like cars or bikes. The severity of the Soft Tissue Damage will determine the treatment. Sometimes surgery may be required.

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Who Suffers Soft Tissue Trauma

Theoretically, all dogs can suffer Soft Tissue Trauma, in practice however pet dogs kept in an apartment may never suffer one in their entire life. Conversely, the strong and agile German Shepherd breed is very susceptible to Soft Tissue Trauma if they are kept as outdoor working dog. The more intensive and varied the exercise and playtime that you offer your German Shepherd, the more likely that your dog will get hurt at some point. However, this should not be an excuse for you to keep your dog indoors all day apart from a brisk walk on the leash every so often.

Why? Because, although an individual Soft Tissue Trauma may look terrible, overall it is insignificant compared to all the ailments and problems that a "GSD-safekeeping" regime implies. Also, just like with us who won't shed many tears about an

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athletic injury suffered in team sport with friends, you can be sure that your German Shepherd will take it with composure if it gets hurt while exercising or playing with you. The appreciation of being with you and getting the mental and physical challenges it needs will outweigh the most serious Soft Tissue Traumas.

**Warning Signs**

Depending on the type of Soft Tissue Trauma, the damaged area may be swollen, or your dog may be limping or whining. Sometimes, German Shepherds will do neither, they will just get on with it quietly because they are not a bewailing breed like many others.

You will know your dog best - whenever it is less agile than usual, there is a reason for it. Inspect your dog closely to notice the cause. Also watch

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out where your GSD is licking itself. Licking can indicate a Soft Tissue Trauma, a Skin Allergy (see 19) or a Skin Infection (see 16), while scratching would indicate an allergy or infection only.

If your dog has clear problems with movements, the cause can be a Soft Tissue Trauma or an internal ailment (compare the warning signs of the other ailments in this Health Manual).

**Preventing Soft Tissue Trauma**

The easiest way to avoid the most common causes of Soft Tissue Damage is to keep an eye on the environment where your GSD is exercising or playing. Hits by cars and bikes are both most common and rather easy to avoid: Unless exceptionally well trained (see German Shepherd Obedience Training), keep your GSD on the leash while you two are near roads or driveways.

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However, let your dog run freely off-leash in the wide open space once you considered potential dangers.

A German Shepherd that gets lots of varied, regular exercise and is fit is less susceptible to suffer Soft Tissue Trauma than a GSD that is mentally and physically unprepared (and possibly overly excited) when you one day decide to have some play time or adventure time. Ideally, what you want is that your dog is so much used to all sorts of exercise and play that it remains calm and controlled and aware of its environment.

For this reason, do not follow the unreasonable "advice" you can find in too many cheap places, to make your dog a "leash dog"! By its very nature, a German Shepherd in particular is an agile guard dog capable of controlling numerous other animals. A GSD must be allowed to exercise its genetic roots. A German Shepherd requires a

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lot of freedom. If you don't like this, by all means get a Papillon or whatever.

Adapt the form of exercise to the environment. For example, if you are in difficult terrain where there are sharp objects on the ground (stones, wood, shells etc), don't make your dog run or jump at all. Consider that your dog has to go barefoot while you use shoesoles to protect your own feet against cuts, abrasion etc, and to cushion your ligaments, tendons, and joints to prevent strains.

So, let your dog determine the pace of walking in difficult terrain - or not to walk any further at all. Depending on the rigidity of your German Shepherd dog training you may actually notice that, being a guard dog for herding sheep, your GSD may try to lead you on a better path if you only let it.

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Alternatively, get your GSD Full Feature Dog Boots or High Performance Dog Boots for this sort of terrain.

**Treating Soft Tissue Trauma**

Treatment of Soft Tissue Damage is not always necessary. Like with us, Soft Tissue Damage will often heal itself as long as your dog is otherwise healthy and gets a lot of rest to allow for the healing. Therefore it is important that you never force your dog to walk, run, jump, swim, or whatever. Just because you want your dog to do this right now doesn't mean that your dog feels able to do this right now.

Your dog can't tell you "Ah, today my right shoulder hurts so much, I feel I have a strain, I cannot move my front limbs, just let me rest on a pillow". You can be sure, if a German Shepherd

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loses its agility, there is a cause for it. So, be considerate. If you are considerate with your German Shepherd, your dog will be considerate with you.

If your dog is limping a wrist wrap or hock holder may help, but if it is more severe a leg splint may be necessary. For hip or back problems, the back and hip support brace may help. However, unless you have orthopedic knowledge, you will probably need the vet for an exact diagnosis, so that you don't make things worse. Letting your dog rest a lot is the most important treatment upon Soft Tissue Damage. If your German Shepherd is in pain, you can of course consider to relieve its pain with the best dog pain medication.

Should you decide to visit the vet, your vet will probably want to take X-rays and ultrasound imaging. In any case, they too will then prescribe a lot of rest, and possibly some pain medication.

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or medication to speed up the healing. The best dog pain medication helps with both, and is cheaper. Only very rarely surgery should be required.

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Diabetes

Diabetes in dogs is the same as it is for people - the result of a deficiency in the hormone insulin, causing a decrease in their ability to metabolise sugars in their blood. It is the single most common endocrine ailment dogs can get and comes in two forms, like for humans.

Type I Diabetes is when the body does not produce enough insulin. Type II Diabetes is when the body stops being able to use the insulin effectively to process sugars.

Who Suffers Diabetes

There are strong indications for Diabetes to be hereditary, however there is no doubt that certain ailments - eg Pancreatitis (see 5) and Obesity (see 25) - certain medications such as steroids

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and glucocorticoids, and also viruses can cause Diabetes too.

Most often, Diabetes strikes between age 7 and 9, and more females than males - although spaying your female GSD as a puppy reduces the risk of Diabetes substantially. Overall, German Shepherds are less susceptible to contract Diabetes than other breeds in general (the Samoyed, Cairn and Tibetan terriers are most susceptible).

Both dogs and people that eat a carbohydrate-rich diet are likely to suffer Diabetes sooner or later.

**Warning Signs**

Usually your dog will start to show various symptoms when Diabetes becomes an issue: A dog with Diabetes will be excessively thirsty and
relieve itself more frequently, and it will lose weight despite eating more (same level of exercise). Lethargy is also common.

To actually diagnose Diabetes, the vet will need to do a full physical check for Urinary Tract Infection (see 26), blood glucose levels, blood count, and Pancreatitis (see 5), because a number of other diseases must first be ruled out before Diabetes can be confirmed.

**Preventing Diabetes**

1. Avoid much carbohydrates in the diet. Carbohydrates are *not* needed to thrive, neither for dogs nor for people. Today we know that carbohydrate-rich diets cause inflammation in the cardiovascular system. Frequent inflammation in the cardiovascular system then *causes* or at
least triggers Diabetes, Epilepsy, and other disorders!

Preventing Diabetes starts with the selection of a puppy from the best German Shepherd breeders who aim to select only a healthy dam and sire for their breeding program. This way you rule out the hereditary factor of Diabetes.

Next, make sure that you feed your German Shepherd only natural dog meals of high nutritional value - without all the preservatives, additives, colorings, thickeners and fillers, etc - and low in carbohydrates, sugars, and fats. Always supply a bowl of fresh water, day and night.

Do not, I repeat, do not think "If I restrict the amount of water my dog gets, I don't need to walk my dog that often". If your dog can't relieve
itself every three hours maximum when awake and after six hours when the metabolism is slowed down during sleep (and a puppy every hour), then you are asking for ailments like Bladder Infection (see 26), Bloat (see 4), Digestive Disorder (see 5), Kidney Failure (see 30) etc - all the way through to otherwise rare conditions such as liver disease, blindness, etc.

If you can't walk your dog that often, get a German Shepherd suitable dog potty.

Finally, regular exercise strengthens the metabolism of your dog which, among countless other benefits, will make an outbreak of Diabetes less likely.

**Treating Diabetes**

1. Avoid much carbohydrates in the diet. Carbohydrates are *not* needed to thrive,

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neither for dogs nor for people. Today we know that carbohydrate-rich diets cause inflammation in the cardiovascular system. Frequent inflammation in the cardiovascular system then causes or at least triggers Diabetes, Epilepsy, and other disorders!

Treatment of a dog that is diagnosed with Diabetes is very time consuming and costly, because you will need to administer regular insulin shots - lifelong - and you must ensure utmost compliance with the vet's recommended dog meals, meal times, and feeding routine (see House training a dog). Although there exist oral insulin drugs, these are not effective in German Shepherds because of poor absorption.

Treats, table scraps, and scavenging food outside can make an otherwise controllable Diabetes a

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life-threatening condition, therefore they must strictly be avoided.

In addition, certain drugs can no longer be administered when your dog has Diabetes. This means, if you can't prevent that your GSD gets Diabetes, you may not be able to easily cure it from other ailments later either.

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Vomiting

Vomiting is a digestive system disorder describing the condition of involuntary evacuation of undigested or partly digested substance matter through the esophagus out of the mouth.

Every dog vomits - and a lot more often than we do. It is a natural reflex of removing any foreign objects that it may have ingested. Scavenging is a major reason for Vomiting - unless untrained using rigid German Shepherd dog training.

For the most part you can ignore Vomiting, but every now and then it can be a symptom of something worse (compare the warning signs of the other ailments in this Health Manual).

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Who suffers from Vomiting

Vomiting does not relate to a particular dog breed. Instead it relates to the specific health problems a dog may have. Acute Vomiting can be caused by a sudden change in diet or the ingestion of something your dog's body cannot digest. It can also result from quick ingestion of food, particularly dry food. But hopefully you won't feed dry food anyway, and you help your GSD to eat slower.

Finally, parasites and worms too can cause Vomiting in your German Shepherd. Roundworms are particularly common causes of Vomiting, along with Giardia and Coccidia, which will sometimes show in the feces or vomit.

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Warning Signs

If your GSD vomits repeatedly, it could mean that the digestive tract is blocked by a foreign object or that your dog ingested a poison. Obstructions will often be accompanied by Bloat (see 4) and a complete lack of movement as well.

Note that it is rare that a dog vomits for a reason other than something it has ingested earlier. However, the Vomiting may start anytime from a second since ingestion to hours since ingestion. At night, when the metabolism is down, it could even start many hours after ingestion.

If Vomiting is a serious health issue, it normally is accompanied by other symptoms including Diarrhea (see 22), lethargy, behavioural problems and more. Additionally, if your dog vomits multiple times, it can be a sign of something worse.

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There are two forms of Vomiting you need to be wary of: If your German Shepherd suddenly vomits multiple times, it could be a medical emergency and should be treated immediately. Also, if your GSD vomits every day or week, it could be a chronic issue related to an allergy or illness.

**Preventing Vomiting**

To prevent Vomiting as much as possible, don't give your German Shepherd any table scraps, train your dog not to scavenge, don't serve large meals or dry meals, and always provide ample amounts of fresh water.

Ensure that your German Shepherd won't eat fast. A fantastic remedy for this is the technically best Eat-Slow bowl (no wonder that it got so far only positive reviews). However, if you prefer

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metal bowls, you will have to accept the second-best remedy, the best metal Eat-Slow bowl. Whichever bowl you prefer, you can place it in an enclosed area (simple plinths fixed on the ground will do) - an area as large as you want your dog to move the bowl around (the more the bowl moves, the slower your dog will eat, but the more you may have to clean up).

Both the sturdy plastic Eat-Slow bowl and the metal Eat-Slow bowl not only substantially reduce or even eliminate Vomiting, they also significantly reduce Bloat and hence also the risk of Gastric Torsion (see 4). In addition, slower eating means that your German Shepherd will digest the food better, so that its metabolism makes better use of the nutrients in the food. This also means that your GSD will sooner feel full, will eat less, and will scavenge less. Finally, both bowls perfectly match our advice to serve your dog two or three times a day.
smaller meals during the day, rather than a single large meal.

Don't let your German Shepherd play with anything that could easily be ingested if your dog gets too carried away. All German Shepherd toys should be of suitable 1) size, 2) weight, 3) shape, and 4) material.

Don't let your GSD chew on eg household items that may have a hazardous paint, varnish or other form of coating. Note that chemicals don't fade away when drying up!

Treating Vomiting

To treat repeated or chronic Vomiting, you should visit the vet to determine the underlying cause. Obviously, cases of sudden Vomiting multiple times must be treated as an emergency because it shows that there is a persistent obstruction or

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adverse reaction to a substance your GSD has ingested. Just serving water is not a sufficient treatment and possibly not even an appropriate treatment in this instance.

If your dog has ingested a hazardous substance, in rare cases water may make it worse since water may not only dilute but disseminate the substance. Flushing the throat, stomach, and gut should always be left to the vet.

Where the cause is an obstruction, in rare cases you may have to help your dog to throw up the obstruction with a firm and targeted pat on the upper chest. This must always be done while your dog's mouth is facing down, so that the obstruction can more easily come out.

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Kidney Failure

Kidney failure (Chronic Renal Failure or CRF) is the inability of the kidneys to remove waste products, toxins, phosphorous etc from the blood in the form of urine. When this happens, toxins will start to build up in the body, which will lead to various other ailments too.

Who Suffers Kidney Failure

The typical cause of Kidney failure is simply ageing of the kidneys - CRF predominantly strikes beyond age 7. Additionally, some other ailments can cause Kidney failure, including Bladder Infection (see 26), Pancreatitis (see 5), Heart Muscle Disease (see 24), Obesity (see 25), a Tumor (see 20), and possibly even Hypothyroidism (see 17) and Diabetes (see 28).
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While all dogs can suffer from Kidney failure, German Shepherds are more susceptible than some other dog breeds.

**Warning Signs**

Dogs that suffer from Kidney failure will often show an increased thirst followed by excessive drinking and increased urination. They will show severe lethargy and may even start Vomiting (see 29) with a fetid odor in their vomit and their normal breath. They will also often hesitate to eat and show signs of weakness as a result. Finally, affected dogs can show signs of depression and may lose general coordination while walking.

**Preventing Kidney Failure**

To help prevent Kidney failure, where you can, ensure that your German Shepherd won't contract

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any of the initiating ailments mentioned above. The most important avoidance measure seems to be to give your dog plenty to drink every day and to allow it to urinate frequently.

In addition, of course you must avoid any situations where your dog has access to ethylene glycol - a substance in automotive antifreeze liquids etc - because this toxic substance induces Kidney failure.

If you suspect Kidney failure, you should visit the vet immediately. Although there is no actual cure for Kidney failure, early diagnosis will help treatment.

**Treating Kidney Failure**

Usually, treatment includes advanced fluid therapy, careful management of blood abnormalities with intravenous drugs, special diet

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with phosphorous and protein restrictions, as much water as the dog can drink, and special care to make sure the dog has everything it needs.

Affected dogs may also need anemia management (red blood cells) and vomiting control with special drugs.

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Kennel Cough

Kennel cough (Infectious Tracheobronchitis) is a highly infectious ailment that is characterized by heavy, honk-like contagious coughing. Since Kennel cough can indicate other more severe diseases and also lead to pneumonia, it is considered dangerous, and kennels and boarding locations often require vaccination before they would keep your dog overnight. However, note that there exists no single vaccination against Kennel cough since several viruses and several bacteria can be the cause of it.

Who Suffers Kennel Cough

Dogs most likely to contract Kennel cough are those that have been held in locations with a number of other dogs, one of which was infected.
- at that time or earlier: Kennel cough can spread through the air when the infected dog coughs or sneezes, through direct contact, and also through contaminated surfaces (crate, blanket, toys, bowl, etc). Some of the pathogens that cause Kennel cough also cause much more dangerous and even deadly diseases, and some of the pathogens can survive on surfaces for several weeks.

Hence, Kennels that do not frequently apply a rigid decontamination routine on their facilities (unknowingly) help spread this disease. Puppies are especially susceptible to Kennel cough as they can get sick much faster and more severely.

German Shepherds are however not particularly susceptible to Kennel cough.

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Warning Signs

The early warning signs of Kennel cough are irritated eyes, a runny nose and sneezing. Snorting is particularly common after exercise or excitement. Three to five days after infection, the affected dog will develop the distinct cough - a loud cough that sounds like a honk - and this can then last between one and three weeks. The cough will get worse when the dog is active or excited, and it generally sounds as if the dog has something stuck in its throat. The affected dog may cough up fluid with severe bouts, and it may even vomit. Other symptoms include general depression, breathing problems, loss of appetite, lethargy, and sometimes fever.

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Preventing Kennel Cough

To prevent Kennel cough, be wary about where you leave your German Shepherd when you can't take your dog with you upon traveling. Make sure it is a safe location where dog health is on top of the agenda.

If you notice several of the warning signs mentioned above, visit the vet immediately. The vet will perform chest X-rays to check for pneumonia, as well as basic blood tests and fecal tests to rule out the chance of a parasite.

Kennel cough itself is not really dangerous - in an otherwise healthy dog it will eventually disappear with or without treatment. However, the reason why it must be diagnosed and treated immediately is that Kennel cough may indicate an infection by eg the deadly canine distemper virus (which is a carrier of Kennel cough too), and in...
addition it may also lead to other infections such as pneumonia. Therefore, you must really take care to prevent the spread of Kennel cough.

Depending in the planned environment for your German Shepherd (eg dog park, Kennel, or whatever), you may want to consider to have your dog vaccinated against the most dangerous pathogens of Kennel cough too (for example, the canine distemper virus). Visit your local professional vet well in advance.

**Treating Kennel Cough**

To treat Kennel cough, the average vet will usually simply prescribe cough suppressants and antibiotics. You will also need to keep your dog away from other dogs, minimize its exercise during the illness, and give it plenty to drink. Open your dog's airway by removing the collar,

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and keep your GSD away from dust, smoke, pollen, etc. Take slow walks with your dog to provide lots of fresh air without the usual exercise regime.

Note that proper diagnosis is (always) crucial, since it will determine the appropriate treatment. Say, your German Shepherd has contracted Kennel cough through the canine adenovirus. Then antibiotics are ineffective (again), and antivirals are needed. However, if for example the pathogen has been the bacterium bordetella bronchiseptica, or if the Kennel cough led to pneumonia, then antibiotics are highly useful and an entirely appropriate treatment.

The earlier your vet diagnoses the right cause of the ailment, the more effective the treatment will be. This should limit the side effects (and overall costs) and put least strain on your German Shepherd.

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