



AMSCOPE

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Extremely Lethal to Pets Yet Found in Most Homes and Often in Harm's Way

One pill from your medicine cabinet, dropped on the floor or mislaid on a coffee table, can be deadly to your pet. In addition, while some medications are used in both animals and humans, you should not give your pet a medication that was prescribed for you, as the dose or ingredients could be dangerous to your pet.

Pet poisoning from accidental ingestion of human medications account for one-quarter of calls to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center (APCC). Many pet owners are not aware that even over-the-counter medications can poison their pet.

10 Common Human Medications That Can Poison Your Pet

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) reported the top 10 medications that are most often involved in pet poisonings reported to the ASPCA's APCC hotline.¹ If you have any of these in your home, be sure they are kept safely out of your pet's reach at all times.

1. Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)

Ibuprofen, such as Advil and Motrin, often has a sweet outer coating that seems tasty to pets. If ingested, it can cause stomach ulcers and kidney failure. Ibuprofen is just one type of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that may harm your pet.

Such drugs can be harmful to your pet even in very small doses. Symptoms of poisoning include digestive upset, vomiting, bloody stool, increased thirst, increased frequency of urination, staggering and seizures.

2. Tramadol (Ultram)

Tramadol (brand name Ultram) is a pain reliever that's sometimes prescribed to pets as well as people. However, if your pet consumes too much, it can lead to sedation, disorientation, vomiting, tremors and seizures.

3. Alprazolam (Xanax)

This anti-anxiety medication is sometimes prescribed as a sleep aid as well. In pets, ingesting it may lead to sleepiness (or in some cases agitation), drops in blood pressure, weakness and collapse.

They pose a significant risk because many people keep them on their nightstands in order to take them just before bedtime.

4. Adderall

Adderall contains amphetamines and is often prescribed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children.

It acts as a stimulant in pets, however, and may lead to life-threatening elevated heart rate and body temperature, hyperactivity, tremors and seizures. The ADHD medications Concerta and Ritalin may have similar effects.

5. Zolpidem (Ambien)

This is another sleep aid that many pet parents leave on their nightstand to take before bedtime. If your cat decides to sample it, it could lead to sleepiness and make him wobbly. If a dog consumes it, it may lead to severe agitation and elevated heart rates.

6. Clonazepam (Klonopin)

Clonazepam, brand name Klonopin, is prescribed as an anticonvulsant and anti-anxiety medication as well as a sleep aid. It may lead to sleepiness and wobbliness in pets, as well as low blood pressure, weakness and collapse.

7. Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

Even acetaminophen, common in many U.S. households, is extremely dangerous to pets. Cats, in particular, are very sensitive to its effects; just two extra-strength tablets can be fatal for felines. Acetaminophen can cause liver damage as well as red blood cell damage at higher doses.

The latter may make the cells unable to carry oxygen, which can be deadly. Symptoms of acetaminophen poisoning are lethargy, trouble breathing, dark-colored urine, diarrhea and vomiting.

Many over-the-counter medications contain acetaminophen, including sinus and cold formulations.

8. Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)

This over-the-counter pain reliever can lead to stomach ulcers and kidney failure in cats and dogs, even at very small doses.

9. Duloxetine (Cymbalta)

This antidepressant, anti-anxiety drug may lead to agitation, vocalization, tremors and seizures in pets.

10. Venlafaxine (Effexor)

Venlafaxine (brand name Effexor) is an antidepressant that may cause agitation, vocalization, tremors and seizures. According to the AVMA, "For some unknown reason, cats love to eat the capsules,"² but consuming them may lead to severe neurologic and cardiac side effects.

If your dog or cat ingests an antidepressant, symptoms can include listlessness, vomiting, and in some cases, a condition known as serotonin syndrome. This condition can cause agitation, disorientation and an elevated heart rate, along with elevated blood pressure and body temperature, tremors and seizures.

How to Keep Your Pet Safe From Medication Poisoning

The best way to avoid this preventable form of poisoning in your pet is to keep all medications stored safely out of your pet's reach. Even natural products, including herbal supplements, should be kept safely stowed away. Medications and supplements may be metabolized very differently in your pet than they are in a human, leading to unexpected, and sometimes deadly, consequences.

Keep in mind, too, that dogs can quickly chew through a pill bottle to reach its contents while cats can be quite clever at removing lids. Store medications in a cabinet that is either too high for your pet to reach or impossible for him to open (some cats and dogs can open cabinets, too, so plan accordingly).

Avoid storing medications on your nightstand or leaving them out on your kitchen counter or coffee table. If you accidentally drop any, be sure to pick up every pill immediately. Also, store your pet's medications in a separate spot from human medications to avoid mix-ups.

Finally, if you think your pet has ingested a potentially poisonous medication, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435 and bring your pet to an emergency veterinary facility immediately.

**The deadline
for the December issue
is November 15**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 Ways Your Yard Can....	4
AMSC Pin Recipients	3
Bouquets & Biscuits	3
Cannabis	4
Extremely Lethal to Pets	1
Joint Disease	6
NEW APPLICANTS	4

LOOK

Please let me know if you make a change

* **DECALS & PINS.** You can get AMSC decals (\$1.00) and replacement pins (\$7.50) from

Jacquelyn Ebersbach
424 45th Street

West Palm Beach, FL 33407
saxonyms@comcast.net

***LOCAL CLUBS...**please be sure to include all information when sending Specialty tear sheets for inclusion in AMSCOPE e.g. Judges, dates, entry, obedience.

***LOCAL CLUBS...PLEASE** send a copy of your newsletter to the following members of the Local Club Bulleting Committee.

Chair: Laurie Moore
1785 Ocean Blvd. #312
Coos Bay, OR 97420
swdesign@ymail.com

Kennalea Pratt
535 East Woodland
Springfield, MO 65807-3607
kennalea@mindspring.com

Marilyn Oxandale
10117 Maeborn Terrace
St. Louis, MO 63126-1814
oxandale@aol.com

Report all changes to the Roster to
treasurer@AMSC.us
Bonnie Keyes
511 River Terrace
Endicott, NY 13760
(607)742-3828

How to React When a Neighbor Complains About Your Dog - Don't Get Defensive!

Five things to do when your neighbor complains about your dog.

By Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

The natural thing to do when someone complains about your dog is to get defensive. "My dog? Causing a problem? How dare you?!"

You can't assume your dog has been a saint all day just because he's asleep when you get home.

Don't go there. Defensiveness exacerbates hostilities, escalates tension, and encourages your neighbor to make a mountain out of what you perceive to be a molehill. Remember, it's all about perception, and your neighbor's perception is his reality. Instead of being defensive, try these things:

1. Listen

Unless one of you plans to move, defusing the situation beats all-out war. Set defensiveness aside, and listen to what your neighbor says. Assume there's some nugget of truth to his complaint. You need to find it, so you can figure out what to do with it. He says your dog barks all the time, underneath his bedroom window, and wakes him up. That may be an exaggeration, but chances are your dog is barking some of the time, especially if you leave her out in the yard, or if she has free backyard access through a doggie-door.

2. Empathize and Apologize

Without admitting guilt, empathize with your complainer. "It must be frustrating to have to listen to barking dogs when you're trying to sleep." Be sincere. Tell him you're sorry he's being disturbed by barking. Reassure him that you don't want your dog to be a nuisance, and you want to help find a solution to his concerns. Ask him to bear with you while you work on the problem. Bake him chocolate chip cookies.

3. Investigate

Ask questions that won't make your neighbor defensive. "Is there a time when it's most annoying?" "Are there other dogs that are barking too?" "Other than giving up my dog, what would make you happy?" Set up a video camera or voice-activated tape recorder to document your dog's activities when you aren't home. Alternatively, take a day off and watch your own house from a distance, to see what goes on that might make your dog bark. Check the neighborhood to see if there are other dogs whose barking might be blamed on your dog. Ask other neighbors if they hear your dog, and if so, when and how much.

4. Be Legal, Be Considerate

Make sure your dog is currently licensed, and obey all local animal control laws. Maybe your neighbor is complaining because your dog runs loose and he feels threatened (even though you know your dog is a pussycat), or because you don't clean up when you take her for walks. Those are legitimate grounds for complaint (as is excessive nuisance barking) even if your dog is a pussycat. You don't want animal control to find you in violation of anything. Obey leash laws and scoop laws, and respect your neighbor's discomfort with your dog – don't let her off-leash even if you're just walking out to your car. If she runs over to happily greet him, you'll fuel the fires.

5. Take Action

Make changes to accommodate your neighbor and protect your dog. If his complaint is early-morning noise and she's barking when you let her out at 6:00 am while you shower, alter your routine. Get up earlier and go out with her. Let her eliminate, then play with her. Keep her quietly occupied rather than leaving her to find her own entertainment. If it's random throughout-the-day backyard barking while you're away, bring her in and close the dog door. She doesn't have to be outside all day. If things get ugly, leaving her out unattended exposes her to great risk from an irate neighbor. If necessary, pay someone to let her out for a noon potty break. If the complaint is about barking even when you are home, behavior modification is in order. (See "Modifying Your Dog's Barking Behavior," WDJ July 2007). If it's something other than barking, determine how you can modify the situation to mitigate the problem.

Some examples:

-Your dog charges the fence. Your neighbor fears for his children's safety. Make the fence solid, or put up an inner fence so there's an "airlock" between dog and kids.

-Your dog came over and attacked his dog. You think your dog was just playing, but whatever. Vow that your dog is never off her leash in your neighborhood. Even just walking to your car.

Keep your neighbor informed of your efforts to address his concerns. Document your actions in a journal in case you do have to face animal control. Ask your neighbor to let you know if he sees improvement – and document that. Save receipts for anything you buy to modify your dog's environment. If you see your neighbor deliberately antagonizing your dog, document that with a video camera. Keep your dog safe. Be considerate. Keep baking chocolate chip cookies.

6 Ways Your Yard Can Kill Your Pets

Your yard can be your oasis, but it can also be a land mine of potential hazards to your pets. Whether you're looking for a new house or want to spruce up your current backyard, there are a number of risks you should pay attention to in order to keep your furry friends safe. And breathing.

1. Not enough shade

"Just like humans, dogs need a spot to get out of the sun," says Duffy Jones, a veterinarian at Peachtree Hills Animal Hospital in Atlanta. Otherwise, they can overheat and dehydrate.

"Dogs can suffer canine heat stroke, which can be just as potentially life-threatening to them as it is to humans," he says.

If you keep your dog outside for long stretches, place a doghouse in the shade or an area protected from direct sun. And yes, cats also need access to a shady spot.

"Also make sure they have access to plenty of clean water," he adds. "A big part of the heat stroke is the dehydration that occurs with the overheating."

In addition to shade structures, you can create cool zones with foliage.

"Create a cozy spot to relax under a tree," suggests Cassy Aoyagi, co-founder and president of FormLA Landscaping, a sustainable landscaping firm based in Los Angeles. Air temperatures beneath trees can be as much as 20 degrees cooler, she says.

Want to go further? You can cool down an area even more by planting additional heat-absorbing bushlike foliage. A native grass lawn helps, too.

2. Mulch

The dyes used to color your mulch those vibrant hues of red or cocoa brown can land your pet in the animal ER. For instance that chocolate-colored mulch actually contains cocoa bean, which has a compound that can be toxic to animals. Theobromine can cause heart rate increases, arrhythmia, hyperactivity, and possibly seizures.

Before installing mulch, read labels or ask your landscaper for details about how the mulch was tinted. Or, avoid dyed mulch altogether.

"It's the best way to keep pets safe," Jones says.

Mulch also poses a choking danger.

"Many dogs eat the stuff, which can cause everything from upset stomachs, vomiting, and diarrhea, depending on how it's dyed and if it's treated with pesticides," Jones adds. "Chewed mulch can also re-

sult in total intestinal blockages that require surgery,"

Puppies are particularly bad about chowing down on lots of mulch. It's best to watch your pet carefully and, if it seems to eat much excessively, consider some alternatives like pine straw. That pets won't usually eat.

3. Ticks

Spending time near the soil increases the chance of a flea or tick hitching a ride into your home or onto your cat or dog. To ward off these parasites, sprinkle nematodes around the soil, suggests Anthony Smith, president of Nursery Enterprises in Rexburg, ID.

"Nematodes are tiny wormlike bugs that kill much, if not all, of the fleas and ticks that come into contact with the soil without posing a risk to pets," he says.

Check your local garden center for nematode applications available in your area.

4. Pesticides

Pesticides are a popular way to control weeds. But if not used properly, they can be absorbed by your cat's or dog's pads -- poisoning them, perhaps fatally.

The good news is the risk can be significantly reduced if pesticides are allowed to dry completely before your pet prances on the lawn, Jones says.

"A good rule of thumb is allowing 24 hours to let everything dry and the pesticides to be absorbed by the weeds so they can do their job," Smith adds.

The safest plan is to rid your lawn of weeds the old-fashioned way -- by digging them out of the ground. Aoyagi suggests trying to control pests with plant choices.

"Many native grasses are more resistant to weeds because they're bred for the region," she says.

5. Certain types of plants

Before undertaking any landscape renovation, make sure your landscaper knows you have a dog, as well as its size, breed, and tendencies. Why? Many dogs like to snack on a variety of different shrubs, flowers, and plants -- and some of them can be toxic.

"Oleanders, autumn crocus, and azaleas are just a few plants that can be dangerous to pets," Aoyagi says. These can cause vomiting, diarrhea, excessive drooling, and even death (depending on the plant and amount eaten).

"Knowing your pets' habits and discussing them with your landscape designer will help ensure you get a garden that works for your full family," she says.

6. Your driveway

It's not just plants and soil that can be dangerous to pets. If you have a gravel or asphalt driveway, there are risks, too. Gravel can get lodged between a large dog's paw pads, or it can cause

small breeds to choke. And an asphalt driveway can burn a dog's pads when it gets too hot. You probably can't keep your dog off your driveway, but you should know how to treat your pup's pads if he burns his paws. Your best bet in this -- and any -- pet health crisis is to consult your vet, or a pet ER if the incident occurs off hours.



AMSC PIN RECIPIENTS

25 years:

Elaine Alles
Patty Ledgerwood
Martin Zarge

5 years:

Jane Caines
Oscar Calvo-Zapata
Darryl Dennis
Deborah Efflandt
Erin/Victor Franco
Shirley Fry
Loretta Gould
Chris Hellman
Sara Mathies
Michelle Peterson
Theresa Scott
Arlene Smith
Sonny Wang
Andrea/Steve Yost
Gregory/Susan Zemany

Bouquets and Biscuits

* **MACH Carbor Call of the Wild MXF T2B** (Am/Can CH Carbor Hot on the Trail x Am/Can CH Carbor Prim and Proper) earned his MACH on October 14, 2016 at the Syracuse Obedience Training Club's agility trial. Jack was bred by Carla Borrelli, is owned by Judy Russell, and is handled by John Russell. And LOVED by all three! Jack celebrated his Master Agility Championship by throwing back his head and howling for pure joy!

* **PACH Diamond D's Listen to the Rain RN MX MXB MXJ MJB MXP7 MXP8 MJP6 MJPS PAX2 OF CAA RATO** (Brodie) bred by Laurie Darman and owned and loved by Linda Maxwell recently earned the American Miniature Schnauzer club Versatility Award.

NEW APPLICANTS

Lisa “Jan” Seay

6554 Hounds Run North
Mobile, AL 36608
janseay@me.com
251 508-5516

Jan has been involved with Miniature Schnauzers for 3 years. She is not a breeder...She shows in Conformation, Agility, Obedience, and Barn Hunt events. She has helped her breeder/mentor at a few conformation shows and plans to continue, along with at least 6 agility trials a year. She belongs to the Mobile Dog Training Club, Mobile, Alabama. Jan is a nurse practitioner...She would like to help our club out with Membership, Agility, and Health... **Jan’s Sponsors are Patti Henderson and Hilde Haakensen.**

Lisa K. Miller

6186 Rosecommon Drive
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092-1850
4-lmiller@comcast.net
770-361-1776 (cell)

Lisa has been involved with dogs (different breeds) for a total of 19 year. She has owned Miniature Schnauzers for the past 5 years: CH Axcium’s Shine On (Finnigan) – 5 years and Axcium’s Drive Me Crazy (Nelly) - 3 years Lisa is not a breeder, but her dogs are co-owned by Hilde Haakensen who retains breeding rights on them... Finnigan has never been bred...Nelly had her first litter this past Jan, and Lisa raised the litter Lisa has done Conformation for 3 years, Agility for 4 years, Obedience for 5 years, and Lure Coursing for 1 year, Rally for 4 ½ years, and Barn Hunt for 1 year Lisa works alongside of Hilde Haakensen at some of the shows and she attends about 30 events per year, including seminars. She belongs to the Atlanta Obedience Club, Norcross, Ga., (Agility Trial Chair, Hospitality), Canine Capers Agility Club, Norcross, Ga., (Building Cleaning), Past Member – Huntsville Obedience Training Club – (Instructor). Lisa’s occupation is in the field of Accounting Software Support Lisa would like to help the club with Rescue, Agility and the 2018 Roving Atlanta Specialty
Lisa’s sponsors are: Hilde Haakensen and Robin Ohrt

Cannabis For Your Dog: How It Can Help

There’s a popular medicinal herb you can give your dog these days ...

... and it’s called cannabis.

Dog owners are using it to help their pets with a wide range of ailments – from anxiety to arthritis to cancer.

Are dogs going to pot?

Not exactly. The cannabis dogs are taking is hemp, not marijuana.

For a long time, hemp was illegal in the US and other countries because it got lumped in with other forms of cannabis. Today, you can buy hempseed products in your local grocery store – not just soaps and lotions, but hempseed protein powders and drinks like hempseed milk.

But the hemp that has therapeutic benefits for your dog isn’t the kind lining the supermarket shelves.

We’re talking about whole herb cannabis.

So what’s the difference between hemp and marijuana?

Marijuana Vs Hemp

Marijuana and hemp both come from the plant *Cannabis sativa* (though marijuana also comes from another member of the Cannabis family, *Cannabis indica*).

The cannabis plant has over 60 chemicals called cannabinoids. The two main types of cannabinoids are cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). CBDs are therapeutic cannabinoids, while THC is the cannabinoid that makes you high.

Marijuana’s THC content is usually between 10 and 15 percent; but hemp must have a THC content of 0.3 percent or less. At this level, cannabis has no intoxicating effect, for people or dogs.

Hemp is higher in CBD, the substance that provides the therapeutic effects.

How CBD Works

The cannabis plant contains a number of different chemicals, including CBD, phytocannabinoids, terpenoids and flavonoids. Humans and other mammals have specific cannabinoid receptor sites. These sites are primarily in the brain and central nervous system, and in peripheral organs, especially immune cells. They make up what’s called the endocannabinoid system.

Studies show that many cannabinoids have

anti-inflammatory effects, and can help with pain, tumors, seizures, muscle spasms, skin conditions, appetite stimulation, aggression, anxiety and neurological disorders.

How CBD Hemp Can Help Your Dog

CBD hemp can help with both chronic and acute disease.

Among chronic conditions, it can help with arthritis, compromised immune systems, stress responses, aggression and digestive issues. There are also studies under way into CBD’s effects on Type 1 diabetes, organ diseases and cancer.

Veterinarians are also finding CBD hemp can be useful in treating acute ailments like sprains and strains, torn ligaments, bone breaks and even during post-operative care to reduce swelling, pain and stiffness.

If your dog’s taking conventional drugs for any of these conditions, CBD hemp may make it possible to use lower doses of the drugs to achieve therapeutic effects. Since conventional medicines do have side effects, this is a useful benefit of CBD.

Does It Work Fast?

As with any herbal medicine, for most ailments you may not see an immediate effect. You’ll need to be patient.

Your dog may feel some pain relief in a few hours but other symptoms like inflammation may take a few days to show improvement.

Safety

First of all, because of the low THC, CBD hemp won’t make your dog high.

The most common side effect of CBD is that your dog may get a little drowsy – about the same as if you gave him a Benadryl.

On rare occasions, side effects have included excessive itchiness or mild vomiting, but these sensitivities are few and far between. If your dog reacts with these symptoms, you should stop giving him cannabis.

If Your Dog Gets Into Marijuana

This article’s not about marijuana, but this is important information. With the legalization of marijuana in many places, poison control centers are hearing more and more about pets getting into their owners’ marijuana stash.

It may be hard to tell if your dog has the munchies (isn’t it a permanent condition in dogs?), but other side effects from marijuana can be quite severe, including lethargy, dilated

pupils, drooling, being off balance, muscle twitching, vomiting, involuntary urination and even unconsciousness.

If this happens to your dog, take him to the vet immediately. He'll need palliative support until the effects wear off.

Case Examples

Australian holistic veterinarian Dr Edward Bassingthwaighte says he's been amazed at the success he's had treating some dogs with cannabis. Here are a couple of cases he told us about.

One is a senior Staffy who had a fast-growing tumor about 6 cm in diameter in her mammary gland. Chest x-rays showed there might be metastasis. Dr Bassingthwaighte treated her with CBD oil and some other herbal medicines. The tumor shrank away to nothing over three months and she's still going strong six months later, with no recurrence. She'd had multiple tumors surgically removed over the years, but it was the CBD oil that really helped her.

The other case is a little old Jack Russell with a severe heart murmur and painful arthritis. He received a whole plant extract containing CBD and in this case also some THC, diluted in 10 ml of cold pressed hemp seed oil. After a month of this medicine he was much happier and more active, wanting to go for long walks, and his heart murmur was much less severe. Dr Bassingthwaighte says "I simply can't explain the improved heart murmur. They normally don't get better."

Dr Bassingthwaighte suggests working with your holistic vet if you think cannabis would help your dog – it's powerful medicine so at least let your vet know what you're doing

Where To Buy CBD Hemp For Your Dog

The safest way to use CBD for your dog is to use a product that's formulated for pets. There are several companies producing CBD hemp for dogs. Some of these are in oil or tincture form, while others actually make treats with CBD.

Here are some reputable suppliers of CBD products for dogs.

Canna-Pet
Canna4Pets
Treat Well
CannaCompanion
Auntie Dolores Treatibles
Nature's Best CBD

Dosing

We asked herbalist Rita Hogan for her advice on dosing CBD oils.

Every dog is different. Rita recommends starting with a low dose and working up to the recommended level so that your dog gets the right dose for his individual needs.

Caution: The dosing advice below is for commercially produced CBD oil for dogs, not for homemade tinctures.

Start Low

Rita recommends starting with 1 drop of CBD oil per 10 lbs of your dog's body weight per day. Give this dose for about a week, then move up to 1 drop per 10 lbs of body weight twice per day.

Some companies sell their CBD in capsules. In this case, start with a quarter of the recommended dose and increase gradually until you see the benefits (again, without side effects).

As long as there are no side effects, you can increase the dose every 4 to 5 days until you see the therapeutic benefits. Side effects may include disorientation, hyperactivity, vomiting or excessive sedation. If you note any of these effects, stop treatment and wait for them to go away, then restart at a lower dose.

Be sure to observe your dog's response. The key is to find a dose where you don't see side effects but you do see results. With continued use, you may need to increase the dose a little over time to achieve the therapeutic results.

If you prefer to buy the CBD treats offered by some companies, start with a quarter cookie and work up gradually from there. Don't exceed the manufacturer's maximum recommended dose for your dog's size

Caution: make sure you store the treats where your pets can't get into them, and make sure others don't hand them out as they would regular treats!

You can use CBD hemp safely and effectively (as well as legally) to treat many canine health issues. And it won't get your dog high!

About the Author Julia Henriques

Julia Henriques is Managing Editor of Dogs Naturally Magazine. A former international banker, she lives in Chicago with her partner Marc and two rescue Samoyeds. She volunteers on the board of Playing Again Sams (Wisconsin Samoyed Rescue).

ED.s Personal Note.

When my pain situation was not changing...only getting worse and my pain management Doctor was going to increase my oxycodone (already taking 6 a day)...I started doing some research . As a result of the research, I ordered some cannabidiol. Then I asked each of my Drs what they thought about it ...all enthusiastically told me to go for it. So, in February 2016 I started taking CBD. It's a good thing I did all the research or I would not have been so patient. After 6 weeks, I could feel a "shave" of difference in pain. After three months, I had cut my oxycodone from 6 to two a day. My doctors took notes every time I came in. Now, after seven months, I am cutting to one oxycodone a day and have half the pain I started with. I can live with that...though I am looking into increasing my dose of the CBD. You can't imagine what that has done for my outlook on life. One of my arthritic dogs has been started on the same CBD that I use.

Six years ago I was diagnosed with both Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia and Multiple Myeloma, both blood cancers. I went through several bouts of chemo with no change. Anyway, two weeks ago I went for blood work at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and last Friday I saw my oncologists....my blood count is almost normal. Thank you CBD!

Remember, the CBD that I take is legal in all 50 states and does not need a script from a doctor...though I recommend a discussion with a doctor.

3 Major Mistakes That Could Cause Joint Disease In Your Dog By Julia Henriques

As dogs age, many of them start to suffer from joint disease (like hip dysplasia). You may see your older dog moving around stiffly, struggling to get up, or not able to zoom upstairs or jump in the car like she used to. And it's not just the seniors either. Younger and younger dogs are getting diseases like hip dysplasia or elbow dysplasia and knee problems like luxating patellas or cruciate ligament tears. And you probably think there's not much you can do to prevent these problems from happening.

Sure, you can give your dog supplements that might slow down joint degeneration. And you can ease any pain or discomfort with herbal or homeopathic remedies but if she's destined for joint problems, you probably assume nothing you can do is going to stop them from happening.

But what if that's wrong?

What if you could help your dog avoid joint disease?

(NOTE: Keep reading to see why over-vaccinating for distemper is one of the biggest mistakes dog owners (and vets!) make when it comes to early onset joint disease. Grab our free Vaccination

3 Common Mistakes

Read on to learn about three common mistakes dog owners make that can contribute to joint disease in their dogs.

Avoid these mistakes and you could have a dog with healthy joints and good mobility for years to come.

Mistake # 1: Over-Vaccinating – Especially For Distemper

There are several studies that point to vaccination, and especially distemper vaccination, as a major culprit in causing joint issues in dogs. Here are just a few of them.

The Canine Health Concern's 1997 study of 4,000 dogs showed a high number of dogs developing mobility problems shortly after they were vaccinated.

Veterinarian Dr Jean Dodds has also observed delayed adverse effects of vaccines of "canine distemper antibodies in joint diseases of dogs."

The Veterinary Products Committee (VPC) Working Group on Feline and Canine Vaccination has noted "...evidence that canine distemper virus (and possibly vaccines) may be involved in canine rheumatoid-like arthritis through the formation of immune complexes."

In 1999, in a well-known study at Purdue University, puppies received rabies shots and the usual cocktail of core and non-core vaccines. The authors found that the vaccinated but not the unvaccinated puppies developed autoantibodies to their own collagen. A follow-up study noted similar results in dogs that had just the rabies vaccine or just the multivalent vaccine.

The vaccinated dogs in this study were literally destroying their own collagen!

In a 1989 study, Bari et al found anti-collagen complexes in all joint disorders in dogs. They found autoimmunity to collagen in 72.4% of dogs with rheumatoid arthritis, 88% of dogs with infective arthritis and 52% of dogs with osteoarthritis. Dogs with cruciate disease also had increased autoantibody levels. They also had higher levels of anti-collagen antibodies in the synovial fluid (which surrounds joints).

Healthy Collagen Is Important

Collagen is the elastic protein that holds skin together. It also makes up 70% to 90% of our muscles, tendons, ligaments and other joint supporting tissues. When collagen breaks down in the body, the joints become less stable, the muscles and connective tissue loosen and become more brittle, and joint disorders start to occur.

Collagen not only protects joint cartilage, it also protects tendons and ligaments against tears.

So when you understand that vaccination damages collagen, it makes sense to limit your dog's vaccinations to help her avoid joint disease and injury in the future.

[Learn more about the connection between vaccines, collagen and joint disease.](#)

One Distemper Vaccination Is Enough!

In the case of distemper, repeated vaccinations are completely unnecessary.

Veterinary immunologist Dr Ronald Schultz did a study where he vaccinated puppies with one dose of distemper vaccine. Just four hours later he placed them in a room with distemper-infected dogs. None of the puppies caught distemper ... all of them were protected from that one shot!

And Dr Schutz had already proved many years earlier that protection from core vaccines (including distemper) lasts at least seven years, and most likely for the life of the dog.

So once your puppy has been vaccinated against distemper, there's no reason to keep repeating this vaccination for the rest of her life.

Yet many veterinarians continue to recommend distemper shots for your dog over and over again. They'll vaccinate at 8, 12 and 16 weeks as a puppy, and then year after year (or at least every three years) for the rest of her life.

So, remember that one properly timed distemper vaccination is enough! Don't risk harming your dog's joints by giving more.

Mistake # 2: Early Spaying Or Neutering

Spay/neuter is always a controversial topic but it's an important one, because it can have a major effect on your dog's joint health.

When puppies are spayed or neutered before they're fully grown, they lose the sex hormones that regulate normal growth.

In each long bone, dogs have a band of cartilage near the joint, known as a growth (epiphyseal) plate. This plate

cont'd on p. 9.....**JOINT DISEASE**

JOINT DISEASE...from p. 6

builds bone as your puppy develops and gets larger and taller. Once your puppy reaches maturity, the growth plate closes and your puppy reaches his full height.

There are several studies showing that the risk of joint disease is much higher if your puppy is sterilized before the growth plates close. Growth plates close at different times depending on the size of your dog and in giant breeds can be as late as 2 years old.

Sterilizing your dog too early can mean higher risk of joint diseases like hip and elbow dysplasia, cranial cruciate tears or patellar luxation. [Read about studies](#) that show the increased effects of early sterilization on these all-too common joint disorders.

Certain breeds are also more prone to these risks.

A [2014 study](#) by Hart BL et al compared the effects of early sterilization on Golden Retrievers vs Labrador Retrievers. The results showed that in Golden Retrievers, neutering at under 6 months increased the incidence of joint disorders to 4 or 5 times that of intact dogs, whereas in the Labrador Retrievers, neutering only doubled the incidence of joint disorders in both sexes.

And a new study published in [2016](#) found that sterilizing German Shepherds under 1 year old increased the incidence of joint disorders from 7% to 21% in males, and from 5% to 16% in females.

Spaying or neutering your dog is a personal decision involving many different factors. But if you do decide to sterilize your dog, you can do a lot to protect against joint problems by waiting until he's fully grown.

Mistake # 3: Ignoring Your Dog's Gut Health

You've probably heard quite a lot about the importance of your dog's gut health in preventing conditions like food allergies and intolerances or irritable bowel disease. That makes sense ... after all, they're all diseases related to the digestive system.

But did you know that an unhealthy gut can cause inflammation throughout the body and also contribute to joint

disease?

So when you see your Golden Retriever start getting stiff and limpy in middle age, you might just chalk it up to arthritis as part of the aging process, especially in a breed that's predisposed to having joint issues.

But your dog's arthritis symptoms could just be one of the common signs of Leaky Gut Syndrome. Leaky Gut can cause many health disorders. Early onset of joint disease can be one of them.

What Is Leaky Gut?

Leaky Gut syndrome is when the lining of the digestive tract known as the intestinal mucosa becomes weakened. Its usual job is to allow nutrients into the blood stream and protect the body from larger, harmful particles.

With Leaky Gut, the lining will allow things like bad bacteria, undigested food particles and toxic waste to leak into the blood stream.

This can damage the immune system and cause overall inflammation in the body. Joint disease can be just one of many possible Leaky Gut symptoms.

If it's Leaky Gut

It can be hard to diagnose Leaky Gut because it can cause so many different diseases. If your dog also shows other signs of Leaky Gut like allergies, skin issues or digestive issues, it could mean Leaky Gut is also causing your dog's joint issues.

A healthy gut is important, no matter what. So taking steps to improve your dog's gut health is always a good idea.

Here are a few things you can do to start healing your dog's gut:

- Feed a species appropriate, whole food based diet
- Minimize vaccines
- Use natural healthcare remedies and pest preventives instead of pharmaceutical products

Leaky Gut is an invisible health issue that affects many, many dogs – and because it presents itself

like other illnesses and allergies, it can go undetected for years.

You Have Some Control

So, is joint disease just due to bad luck or bad genes? Not necessarily. Of course, if you adopt your dog from a shelter or rescue, she's probably been spayed and vaccinated. But you have control over her future care ... including just saying no to that unnecessary distemper vaccine.

And if you're lucky enough to get your dog as a puppy, her risk of joint disease is not just a matter of fate. Because now you know about three things you can do that can really help reduce that risk!

(NOTE: Over-vaccinating for distemper is one of the biggest mistakes dog owners (and vets!) make when it comes to early onset joint disease. Grab our free Vaccination Guide below to understand how over-vaccination affects your dog)

I don't want to dress for Halloween



AMSCOPE

Carla M. Borrelli, Editor
1799 South Creek Road
Derby, NY 14047-9729

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Puppy Sweepstakes: Anne Beckwith
Portland MSC January 18, 2017

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PRESIDENT
Carole Weinberger
5897 Buford St,
Orlando, FL 32835
Phone: 407-822-8103
bandsman@earthlink.net

VICE PRESIDENT
Sharon Edwards
21301 Golf Estates Drive
Laytonsville, MD 20882
Phone: 301-947-8811
lonestarms@verizon.net

SECRETARY
Carol Hafner
576 East Quincy Avenue
Fresno, CA 93720-2125
(559) 435-6207
cnhafnish@sbcglobal.net
secretary@amsc.us

MEMBERSHIP
Jacquelin Ebersbach
424 45th Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
Phone: 561-644-8420
saxonyms@comcast.net

TREASURER
Bonnie Keyes
511 River Terrace
Endicott, NY 13760
(607)742-3828
treasurer@amsc.us

AMSCOPE
Carla Borrelli
1799 South Creek Road
Derby, NY 14047
Phone: 716-627-3206
cborr@aol.com

AMSC Web page: <http://amsc.us>
AKC home page: <http://www.akc.org/akc/>