

## When less is more

There's a line in the movie *Sabrina*, when the heroine says "more isn't always better, sometimes it's just more". When it comes to healthcare for us and our pets, more isn't always better, either. Most people know that drugs can be hard on the body, and you can end up taking one drug to counteract the side effects of another drug. However, even too many "holistic" remedies can be hard on the body as well. The remedies can end up working at cross purposes or causing so much detoxing that the body can't handle it and becomes overly stressed.

I have experienced this myself, as I am very sensitive to not only drugs but natural remedies as well. It didn't occur to me, though, that the same thing can happen to our pets. Our cat, Connie, is about 20 years old and has severe arthritis that has not been responsive to treatment (it could be helped by surgery but she is too old for that). Nothing holistic helped and she had episodes of severe pain last spring, so we decided to try Metacam®, the only NSAID approved for cats. Since cats' livers lack some of the enzymes in more omnivorous animals, such as dogs and humans, they have difficulty tolerating many drugs. The Metacam® helped Connie tremendously—she was a different cat, running around the house and in a good mood. Unfortunately, one of the side effects of Metacam® is acute kidney failure and after 4 days, Connie went into kidney failure. We took her to the hospital and after 4 days of hospitalization and IV treatment, she recovered but that was the end of using Metacam®.

After she recovered, we continued searching for arthritis remedies that she could tolerate but found nothing that worked and didn't upset her digestion. We also continued trying various homeopathics prescribed by our vet, with minimal results. Occasionally, I would give her an oral dose of buprenorphine to reduce her pain, but it was too expensive to administer frequently. Then I learned that it could be made into a cream and rubbed on the ear daily so we decided to try that, since it is fairly safe for cats. At the same time, we also started her on drainage and homeopathic remedies, to help her kidneys recover.

After a week on the buprenorphine, Connie became constipated (a side effect of morphine-like drugs). The second week on it, she became depressed and lethargic, as well as reluctant to eat. Normally, she has an excellent appetite so I was concerned that this indicated kidney failure again. We took her to the vet and her bloodwork was fine (kidney values normal) but in describing to the vet everything she was on, it dawned on me that Connie could be detoxing excessively, in addition to reacting to the buprenorphine. So, we decided to not only discontinue the buprenorphine but also stop all the supplements and remedies. After a few days off everything, Connie started eating well again and her attitude improved. We started up a small dose of **BioPreparation** again (since it is a whole food algae product rather than an isolated supplement) and continued subcutaneous fluids but added no other supplements to her food.

Connie continued improving—her good appetite and happy disposition returned. While her mobility did not improve, she seemed in a much better mood. In fact, her mood was better than before we started the buprenorphine. That was a couple

of months ago and Connie continues to be happier and healthier with a minimum of intervention and supplements. At 20 years old, she doesn't want us doing all kinds of things to try to make her feel better.

We have the physical power to do anything we want to our pets but that doesn't mean it's always right to stuff and squirt whatever we want into them. Even if the supplement or treatment is "beneficial" for them, it may not have beneficial effects on our pet's body if they strenuously object to it. Sometimes pet owners become desperate when their animals get old and ill and start giving them every remedy and treatment they can find to prolong their life. However, when our pets near their end of life, they may no longer want us stuffing everything but the kitchen sink into them to try to cure their ailments and make them feel better.

It isn't always easy to understand or follow a "less is more" philosophy in the face of a society that is constantly offering solutions to fix what ails us or our pets. Even in the holistic health world, the tendency is to push a multitude of remedies and treatments. Connie has taught us many lessons about healing during her life, but perhaps her greatest gift is showing us that she can be happy and functional with a minimum of intervention. With Connie, "less is truly more." By the way, this same philosophy can also apply to people. That is one reason why we prefer the whole food approach and do not sell isolated supplements, vitamins, herbs, extracts, liquid concentrates, or any other non-whole food product on our website.

*Margaret Auld-Louie and Russell Louie have over 75 years of combined holistic experience. You can reach them at [info@OptimumChoices.com](mailto:info@OptimumChoices.com) or call 303-271-1649 or visit their website [www.OptimumChoices.com](http://www.OptimumChoices.com).*

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