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Healthy choices for people and pets

Lymphoma Case Study and Bio-Algae Concentrates

Part 2 – The cat who refuses to die

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Our girl kitty, Iris

As they say, “pride goes before a fall”, meaning don’t get too smug about things. We were congratulating ourselves for healing our cat Iris’ gastrointestinal lymphoma, thinking she was totally recovered since she’d been free of symptoms for almost 2 years. You can read about our past experiences in **Part 1 – Iris gets cancer**. Then this past August (2013), she fell deathly ill again and almost died. In early August we went out of town to visit relatives and celebrate my father’s 90th birthday. I was gone for 10 days and my husband, Russell, was gone for 4 days (he had to return home to tend to our business). We hired a pet sitter to walk the dog and feed the cats while we were gone. In addition, Russell’s part-time employee was here each day. Iris responded well to the pet sitter, and did not seem distressed while we were gone.

However, a few days after Russell returned home, Iris quit eating. The next day she started vomiting, both red and brown liquid (indicating blood). I was still out of town at this point, so could do nothing. Russell thought Iris just ate some “bad” food but at the urging of a vet tech and myself, he took Iris to the vet the next day, a Friday. The vet gave Iris subcutaneous fluids and said to bring her back on Monday if she was not better. When I got home late Sunday evening, Iris was still no better. She was refusing to eat, lethargic and hiding under furniture. She hadn’t eaten since the previous Wednesday. I was alarmed at how ill she appeared. When I had left 10 days earlier, Iris was a healthy, active cat. Now she looked like she was on death’s door.

I took Iris back to the vet Monday morning, where she got more subcutaneous fluids and I urged the vet to do some diagnostic tests. Since we have [pet insurance](#) on our cats, we could afford diagnostics and treatment even though I had lost my job in June. The vet did bloodwork but since that had been insufficient in the past to diagnose Iris, I asked for an abdominal ultrasound as well. That could not be scheduled until the next day, at the local emergency vet hospital, Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital (WRAH).



The next morning we went off to WRAH for the ultrasound. The emergency vet was alarmed at Iris' condition and said she needed to be hospitalized due to dehydration (despite subcutaneous fluids). This was a shock to me, since Iris had not been sick enough during her previous illnesses to be hospitalized. The ultrasound showed acute pancreatitis, something new for Iris, in addition to the thickened intestines and fluid in the abdomen that she had experienced previously. Her bloodwork also showed liver inflammation, indicating that Iris probably had “triaditis”, or a combination of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), liver inflammation and pancreatitis. The emergency vet urged me to do more diagnostics, so I had Iris x-rayed which revealed a spot in her chest that might be a tumor. The cells in the fluid from her abdomen were analyzed but it could not be determined if they were cancerous or not, so they were sent to the vet school at Colorado State University for analysis. The experts there also could not determine if the cells were cancerous or not. No definitive determination could be made one way or the other.

Without doing an intestinal biopsy (which Iris was too sick to undergo), the vets could not determine whether Iris had gastrointestinal lymphoma or severe IBD. Apparently there is a continuum from IBD to lymphoma—IBD can develop over time into lymphoma. The only way to confirm lymphoma is with an intestinal biopsy, which is invasive. We had never done a biopsy on Iris, so her past 2 diagnoses of gastrointestinal lymphoma, based solely on ultrasound, may have been wrong. She may have simply had severe IBD.



Regardless of the diagnosis, Iris was very ill and now under the care of an internal medicine specialist at WRAH. She was given numerous drugs and treatments to try to stabilize her condition, such as IV fluids for dehydration, anti-nausea medications and pain medications (Buprenex). Pancreatitis causes severe pain, so pain medication is necessary. Despite treatment, Iris still refused to eat and began drooling profusely, indicating severe nausea. Different anti-nausea medications were tried, to no avail. Since Iris continued to refuse food,

a feeding tube was inserted into her nose and she was fed thru that. After a couple of days, antibiotics were started since Iris was intermittently running a fever, which could indicate an infection. Although steroids are often used for pancreatitis, the vet didn't want to start them yet in case Iris had an infection (because steroids suppress the immune system). The internist was frustrated because she didn't have a diagnosis, so it was not clear how to treat Iris (pancreatitis is often of unknown cause in cats, unlike dogs.) There was no way to determine if Iris had cancer without expensive and invasive diagnostics. And for us, it was distressing to visit Iris in the hospital and see her so sick and failing to improve. At the time, we didn't see how she could recover from this.

After a few of days of hospitalization and diagnostics, we were rapidly approaching the \$5,000 limit on the pet insurance, so I told the internist we could not afford to continue to hospitalize Iris. The vet then suggested inserting a feeding tube in the esophagus that I could use at home to feed Iris. The tube was inserted on Friday (Iris had been hospitalized since Tuesday morning) and I took her home that afternoon. The internist had biopsied the chest spot for free, which turned out to just be fat and not a tumor. Iris also had a spot on her spleen but we didn't have funds to investigate that as well. While the internist would have liked to pursue more testing to get a diagnosis, this was not possible financially and would not drastically change Iris' treatment anyway. We weren't going to pursue chemotherapy if she did turn out to have lymphoma, preferring to treat it naturally.

Throughout this week, I was also working with my homeopathic vet, who had saved Iris' life during her previous illness, but this time Iris was not responding to any of the homeopathic remedies we tried. It was rather disappointing that Iris failed to respond this time but homeopathy is very tricky, even for expert practitioners. I had recently tried classical homeopathy myself, with one of the best homeopaths in the country, and saw no results from it after a year of treatment. When it works, it can be miraculous, but it doesn't always work because it can be challenging to find the right remedy.



Iris loves lounging in the cat enclosure

As with Iris' previous illnesses, we consulted an animal communicator to find out if Iris wanted us to continue to treat her or just allow her to die. To our surprise, she again told us she wasn't ready to go and wanted us to help her stay here. She was much sicker this time and required aggressive treatment to stabilize her, and then weeks of feeding thru a feeding tube.

Once Iris was home, I had my work cut out for me nursing her. It was a good thing I didn't have a new job yet, since it took a couple of hours a day just to feed Iris. I had to puree the food in the food processor with water, and then suck it into syringes for injection into the feeding tube. To get enough food into Iris, I had to do this four times a day for half an hour each time, since the feeding must be done slowly to avoid upsetting her stomach. When she was in the hospital, her stomach was not emptying properly and she had episodes of vomiting. She was sent home with a drug to improve gastric motility and had to be fed small amounts of food very slowly. I also had to prepare her medications and supplements for injection into the feeding tube. Finally, I had to flush the feeding tube afterwards with warm water, and the water had often cooled off by then, so then I had to rush to get more water before Iris ran away.

Unlike Iris' previous illnesses, where she had recovered with only natural treatments, we now had to give her numerous drugs. She was sent home with the following medications:

- Pepcid AC
- Metoclopramide, to improve gastric motility
- Baytril (antibiotic)
- Clavamox (antibiotic)
- Buprenex (for pain)



Also, my homeopathic vet prescribed sucralfate (Carafate), which is given away from food, to coat her GI tract, and B12 shots, which are given subcutaneously (under the skin). Animals with IBD are often deficient in B12.

Once Iris was home and getting food into her, she started to slowly improve. After a few days, she started to show interest in life again, wanting to go out in the cat enclosure and watch birds. She began to eat a few bites of food. However, her food intake did not improve much over the next couple of weeks, so I consulted the internist about giving an appetite stimulant. The internist eagerly agreed that giving Mirtazapine could help "jump start" Iris with eating. This drug is an anti-depressant for humans that has a side effect of stimulating appetite. So it has a common "off label" use as an appetite-stimulant drug for dogs and cats. It can also make cats more vocal and aggressive, which occurred with Iris, especially the first 12 hours after giving it (it is given once every 3 days to cats).

Mirtazapine was key to Iris' recovery. For the first 12 hours after giving it, Iris would gobble up plates of food like she was starving, then the effect would gradually fade away and her eating would drop off. Over time, as her health improved, the drop off became less severe. By November I was able to start tapering Iris off the drug and stop it by December. She is still very finicky but that was true before her illness as well.



Iris in our dog, Mikki's, stroller

I also took Iris for regular acupuncture treatments, to aid in her recovery. First I took her to the homeopathic vet, but then was delighted to discover a part-time holistic vet at a clinic just a mile from my house who could work on her. Since car travel was traumatic to Iris, I switched to the nearby vet for treatment. This was also more affordable, an important consideration now that Iris' insurance was all used up.

By late September, I was no longer having to feed Iris thru the tube, but was still using the tube for administering supplements and medications. Mixing those in her food would likely cause her to refuse the food. Then a stitch came loose and the feeding tube started sliding in and out. The vet did not think this was a problem, however, a few days later Iris became lethargic and her appetite dropped off. Her behavior reminded me of how she acted two years ago when she had an abscess from our cat Julius attacking her. At that time, her appetite dropped off until I discovered the abscess and started her on antibiotics. I took her to WRAH on a Wednesday, where she saw the same internist that had treated her in the hospital. The feeding tube was removed that day, since Iris had been eating so well. The vet didn't see any evidence of infection at the tube site, and not wanting to upset Iris' digestion with antibiotics, sent her home without any medication. The next day Iris ate very well, having had her dose of Mirtazapine the previous night. Friday her eating dropped off again, and then late Friday night, near midnight, her neck blew up with large swelling where the tube had been. Having been sick myself, I was too tired to take her to the vet that late and felt she would be OK until morning.

Saturday morning I checked Iris' neck and now it was covered with blood and pus, since the abscess had burst. Off we went to WRAH to have the abscess treated, which now required an emergency visit, since it was the weekend. I had serious doubts about being able to get liquid antibiotics into Iris (she is very talented at spitting/drooling out liquid medications or supplements), so they gave her a Covenia shot instead. This is an antibiotic shot that lasts up to 14 days. Some animals have bad reactions to it but Iris did fine. She started to eat better soon after getting the antibiotic shot. I also put warm compresses on the abscess several times a day to help it heal. The internist was very kind and refunded the emergency charges, since I had to take Iris in for treatment on the weekend, after not receiving antibiotics for her during the week.



Iris and our dog, Mikki. They are not buddies—they just both love this chair.

With this latest illness, I decided that we need to focus more on healing Iris' digestive tract, to help prevent another recurrence in the future. We suspect emotional stress plays a part in her illnesses, but there is a limit to how much we can reduce that (for instance, I'm not going to tell my father I can't come to his 90th birthday party because my cat might get sick if I leave her.) Since Iris has an unusual digestive illness, where she is symptom-free for long periods and then suddenly falls deathly ill, we can't really track her progress by absence of symptoms. And it's not practical or affordable to do an abdominal ultrasound every 6 months to check the state of her digestive tract. So, my approach now is to provide her with regular acupuncture and give her a broader array of supplements than we did in the past. Since she has continued to fall ill, that indicates that what we have been doing in the past is not adequate.

My blog readers often ask me what specific supplements I give Iris, so here is the current list. Please do not consider this a prescription for your cat. I am not a veterinarian and cannot prescribe a course of treatment for anyone's cat. I am just sharing what we are now trying with Iris, in an effort to heal her digestive tract. Only time will tell if we are successful or not:

Supplement	Daily Amount	Purpose
BioPreparation-f3+	1 cap	Superfood for overall health
ALPHA-G	¼ tsp	Overall health and digestion
Rx Vitamins Rx Biotic	1 scoop	Probiotic
Rx Vitamins Onco Support	¼ tsp	Digestion and overall health

Seacure	1 cap	IBD
Morinda Supreme	1/3 cap	Anti-viral, -bacterial, -fungal, -parasitic
Moxxor	1 cap	Omega oils (anti-inflammatory)
B12 shots	Monthly	B12 tends to be low with IBD

The first 2 supplements are what we had Iris on previously and the other listed items are new since her latest illness. The amounts given were determined by recommendations from practitioners or from my experience with the products, as well as how much I am able to get into Iris. If you choose to give some of these supplements to your cat, your cat may require different amounts.

Some vets recommend Tylan powder, a low-grade antibiotic, to treat IBD in dogs and cats. My new holistic vet suggested this but we decided to try Morinda instead, which was suggested by my acupuncturist. Morinda has anti-viral/bacterial/fungal/parasitic properties. It is gentler than many herbs, such as black walnut, and is safe for dogs and cats. My holistic vet also suggested Onco support, even though Iris may not have cancer, because it is very supportive of the digestive system and contains an array of nutrients.



I have also been asked by readers in the past where to get the supplements that I give to Iris, so that information is below. I do have a commercial interest in several of these products since they are offered thru our business that my husband runs. When we find a good product that helps our pets, we then offer it thru our business unless the sale of it is restricted to veterinarians or physicians. That is how we got started offering bio-algae concentrates, which are now our main product. I had given them to our elderly cat that was dying of kidney disease and saw an amazing response from her.

1. BioPreparation is available from our business, Optimum Choices:
<http://www.optimumchoices.com/BioPreparation-Algae-Spirulina.htm>.

2. ALPHA-G is available from our business, Optimum Choices:
http://www.optimumchoices.com/PSP_ALPHA-G.htm.
3. Rx Vitamins are sold by vets. You can also buy them online, such as here:
<http://www.amazon.com/Rx-Vitamins-For-Pets-Biotic/dp/B004HYZRFS>
4. Seacure is available from our business, Optimum Choices:
<http://www.optimumchoices.com/seacure.htm>. It is also available directly from the manufacturer's website: <http://propernutrition.com/>.
5. I buy Morinda Supreme from my acupuncturist. It is also sold by chiropractors. The manufacturer's website is here:
<http://supremenutritionproducts.com/MorindaSupreme/index.html>.
6. Moxxor is available from our business, Optimum Choices:
<http://optimumchoices.moxxor.com/>.
7. B12 shots—these are obtained from a veterinarian.



Iris and our dog Mikki, on 1/4/2014. Iris is now free of symptoms.

Because Iris has recovered now from 3 bouts of being deathly ill, I am now calling her “the cat who refuses to die”. We don’t know what the future will bring for her health wise but she is free of symptoms now and happy. We are just glad to have her in our lives for however long she chooses to stay here.

How did bio-algae concentrates do all this? It did not. Bio-algae concentrates simply supplied the body with the super nutrients of Vitamin A, B-complex, C, D, E and K, Omega 3, 6, 9, GLAs (Gamma-Linolenic Acids), ALAs (Alpha-Linolenic Acids), DGLA (Dihomogamma-Linolenic Acid), DHA (Docosahexaenoic acid) and more fatty acids, antioxidants, over 4,000 enzymes, 10 essential amino acids plus 10 non-essential ones, over 5,000 total nutrients, so the **body could resume normal function**. Bio-algae concentrates **do not treat symptoms but holistically balance the whole body**. When the **endocrine and immune systems are holistically balanced**, everything will work like it should. Bio-algae concentrates are such a revolutionary concept they are 100 years ahead of their time. Now that is true holistic wellness and ***Freedom From Illness!***

We now use [ALPHA-G](#) instead of the PSP, rice polysaccharide peptide product, mentioned above.

These results are individual case studies. We cannot guarantee your results will be the same. Since each body responds differently to the super nutrition in bio-algae concentrates your results will be different. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, prevent or cure any disease.