

## Doing Your Homework: Finding Effective Care for Your Pet

### Lesson Summary

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Today, there are more pet care options than ever before, but not all treatments are effective. It's important to do your homework! In this lesson, you'll explore the goals of the pet health product industry and how they sometimes conflict with what's best for your pet.

### Lesson Objectives

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After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explore various holistic pet health care options worthy of your careful consideration
- Commit to choosing food and health products for your pet that are effective and will help your pet thrive

### Lesson Roadmap

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1. Watch the lesson **video** and fill in the note-taking guide below.
2. **Read about it.** Carefully read the suggested resource:
  - a. *The Ultimate Pet Health Guide*, Chapter 8 – **Complementary and Herbal Medicine**
3. **Think about it.** Take several minutes to reflect on the following questions:
  - a. Have you ever tried any "quick fix" products for your pet that you saw advertised on television or on the Internet? What appealed to you about the ad? Did the product work?
  - b. What is the end result when pet food companies market to consumers (pet parents)?
4. **Take action steps** to help your pet thrive.
  - a. Make a commitment to purchase only food and health products that have been proven to be effective.
  - b. If your pet is using a product right now that you haven't researched, do your homework. Check to see if there is evidence supporting health claims and discontinue use if claims are unsubstantiated through credible evidence.

- c. Jot down your reactions to this lesson and your action steps to improve your pet's health in the space provided below.
5. Take the **quiz** to advance to the next lesson.

## Video Notes

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Warning: not everything that is "natural" is good for your pet. In this video, Dr. Richter exposes some of the false claims of popular pet products and describes the dangers of the business side of the pet wellness industry.

Why it's important to talk about the differences between the two different schools of medicine (Western or traditional vs. holistic and alternative care):

- It can be challenging for pet owners to determine what's legitimate.
- It's easy for conventionally practicing veterinarians to \_\_\_\_\_ treatments that don't fit within the Western medical \_\_\_\_\_.

### Western Veterinary Care

- Pro: Solidly based on \_\_\_\_\_
- Pro: Double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial
  - Limits the possibility for extraneous variables clouding the results,

### Reasons for Fewer Research Trials on Alternative Treatments

- Money – The profit potential isn't there to \_\_\_\_\_ for the research
- Thousands of years of clinical \_\_\_\_\_ already exists
- Natural therapies don't often lend themselves to a conventional clinical trial format.

### Challenges

- Some veterinarians discourage the use of alternative therapies.
- The scope of nonconventional therapies is so wide that there are treatments that are not \_\_\_\_\_ or not appropriate.

How do you become a discerning consumer? How do you figure out what is legitimate and what is \_\_\_\_\_ for your pet?

- Speak to a \_\_\_\_\_ or integrative medicine veterinarian in your area.
- Search the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association website:  
<http://ahvma.org>
- Read \_\_\_\_\_ that detail holistic medical alternatives for animals.
- Do some \_\_\_\_\_ research: <http://pubmed.gov>
  - Use common sense.

- Ask your \_\_\_\_\_.
- Remember that just because it's \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't mean it's \_\_\_\_\_.

Before you do anything, make sure what you're doing is \_\_\_\_\_ for your pet.

## Reactions and Action Steps

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What did you learn in this lesson that was new to you or that you found intriguing? Based on what you learned, list any action steps you plan to take. What can you do right now to improve your pet's health? What can you do in the future? What are the major obstacles to taking your action steps, and how will you overcome them?