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The word today is supplement.

So many different types of supplements available for man and animals abundantly easily are abundantly found in every chemist, supermarket, health store, pet supply store, Vet shops or animal health food stores.

It might be difficult to pick and choose which supplements might be best (or needed – essential) for your dog without a sound knowledge of what really is needed.

Also important to know that various assortment and combinations of supplements exist, "some" might aid the immune system "some" might be needed vitamins, minerals, EFA or antioxidants then needed for your dog's daily use and or specific use for your dog's healthy active life.

Some "needed" supplements which will help fill in the gaps regardless of whether you are feeding a raw diet for dogs, a home cooked diet or a commercial dog food diet.

The importance of proper diagnosis.

All too common – the dog is plagued by loose stools, constipation, and skin allergies.

Proper diagnosis is essential to proper care for your dog.

Whenever your dog is experiencing such symptoms, please first visit the Vet or animal health centre for a proper diagnosis before just giving supplements.

Looking at a few most popular supplements dog owners give.

{See various related articles on this website for a more compressive discussion of vitamins, minerals, fat EFA - natural sources and commercial supplements and diet options}

A daily multivitamin and trace mineral vitamins, antioxidants EFA and other supplement.

Regardless of what type of diet you feed, chances are high that you will need to round of the diet with a balanced variety of fats, vitamins, minerals, digestive enzymes or antioxidants.

Looking at vitamin A.

Essential in skeletal growth, proper eye function, healthy skin and mucous membranes -also the body's first line of defence against invading microorganisms and toxins.

It promotes a healthy immune system, destroys carcinogens (cancer causing agents), and guards against heart disease.

Looking at vitamin B12 (Complex).

Helps the functioning of the nervous system, maintains muscle tone in the gastrointestinal (digestive) tract, and aid good appetite.

Aid and maintains the health of skin, coat, eyes, mouth and tongue.

It's essential for normal functioning of the heart.

It's necessary for carbohydrate-fat-protein metabolism, and antibody and red blood cell formation.

Aids in the utilization of some vitamins, stimulates and promote growth, and aids in the formation of antibodies.

Looking at vitamin D3.

Vitamin D3 is the most effective chain breaking lipid-soluble antioxidant in the biological membrane.

It contributes to membrane activity, protecting critical cellular structures against damage from oxygen free radicals.

Looking at Vitamin K.

Vitamin K is a key factor in many immune functions, including white blood cell function and interferon levels.

Due to its antioxidant properties, it combats the effects of free radicals while lowering the risk of cataracts and promoting cell growth and tissue repair.

Looking at digestion supplements.

We all know just how important the assimilation of nutrients is to our dogs.

Whether you are feeding a raw diet for dogs, a home cooked diet or a commercial diet, if all those good building blocks going in it aren't being absorbed, then your dog is not really getting the good nutrition they needs.

Whether your dog has irritable bowel syndrome or inflammatory bowel disease, mal-absorption, gastritis or pancreatitis or weakened digestive or immune system.

Or whether you have a sick, senior adult or puppy dog and you want to be sure that the dog is getting all the nutrients they need ... or whether you are just switching to a raw food diet or other diet and your dog needs a little help in the beginning or in need supplementing whatever you feed then a good digestion supplement might be essential.

Looking at green supplements – daily as part of the feed pan.

Green supplements are a perfect way to round off any diet (raw, cooked or commercial) with the addition of quality micro minerals that are found in nature – plant, herb, vegetable, fruit, fish, birds and prey or commercial animals.

With the addition of minerals and antioxidants, green supplements could be a very safe way to provide some powerful nutrition on a daily basis.

Well known for thyroid support and in assisting in pigmentation, green and colour supplements are something that should be in every dog diet or part of species appropriate feeds.

Looking at immune support.

Whether your dog is 100% healthy or is immune compromised (which includes allergy dogs that have immune systems that are hyper-reactive to something's in the environment or food), supporting the immune system naturally is the very best way to help your dog lead long and healthy lives.

Looking at joint health and muscle building.

With so many working dogs experiencing strains, sprains, arthritis, hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, obsessive-compulsive disorders joint support is essential.

Looking at liver supplement.

We know a dog with liver disease (or other conditions which result in a compromised liver) knows that finding solid information on how to help the dog is few and far between.

Fact > you can't condition the liver or kidneys.

You will find just some supplement that could be beneficial to those with liver compromised dogs.

Looking at Omega 3 Fatty Acid supplements - needed EFA's.

Omega 3's is essential to every diet.

All diets are naturally high in omega 6 fatty acids and while omega 6's are essential, dog owners need to really focus on adding in the right omega 3's to help balance out the diet.

Omega 6's are pro-inflammatory, omega 3's are anti-inflammatory. Whether or not your dog has an inflammatory condition (auto-immune condition, allergies, degenerative joint diseases), omega 3's with EPA & DHA are invaluable when it comes to overall health and function.

In nature – in the wild, our dogs are getting (consume) their full omega 3 fatty acids from the naturally species appropriate diet Mother Nature intended (whole prey animals birds fish etc.

Think about it: every animal protein a dog as carnivore eats in the wild is naturally reared.

And these are where the omega 3's comes from – directly from their species appropriate diets - Mother Nature's own recipes.

Yep they are found in abundance in fish (and it's another reason why feeding a portion fish, especially fatty fish, as a protein for dogs are important) - it's the naturally reared meats that are biologically appropriate – then to know today is our commercial raised and fed meat sources are filled with grow hormones genetically manipulated grains and feeds, preservatives and toxins.

Therefore the need to supplement with correct omega 3's with EPA & DHA for their anti-inflammatory effects (not to mention the lustre they provide to skin

Know this! Some don't supplement with various brands of flax oils and there's a good reason for this.

While flax seed oil does have omega 3 fatty acid but in the form **ALA**. ALA is a plant based omega 3 that needs to be broken down (within the body) into EPA and DHA.

This is not natural to the dog and most dogs cannot do this.

Of course this makes perfect sense since dogs do not get their omega 3's directly from plants in the wild so they do not have a biological need to perform this task.

Rather, they get their EPA and DHA from naturally reared animal or in the wild pre animal's birds or fish sources.

Raw unprocessed chicken or turkey feet - easily obtainable - is an excellent source of Omega 3's.

In addition flax seed oil "might" make "some" dogs itchy and scratch in addition to also providing yet more omega 6 fatty acids.

What is good for humans is not always appropriate for dogs - if you want or need to supply omega 3's to your dogs, if in any way possible do not use flax as a source.

'Use omega 3 sources with EPA & DHA that are biologically appropriate for your dogs from fresh or cold pressed ocean natural deep sea cold water fish and krill.

Looking at skin and coat supplements.

If your dog is having skin or coat issues - starting with a sound nutritional balanced diet will be essential.

"Some" sought after brands supplements naturally support and approve the appearance and texture of your dog's skin and coat. Whether it's itching, allergic to anything outside, dry, dull, pigment challenged or just isn't right, it's time to start good quality natural coat products - Omega 3 EPA & DHA supplement.

If your shampoo contains SLS or SLSa- Sodium laureth sulfate **don't** uses it.

Only natural products and good quality conditioners are appropriate for your dog's skin.

As example "Virbac pyoderma shampoo" or equivalent is suggested and recommended.

Looking at supplements for calming/anxiety.

Sometimes our dogs need a little something to help them get over the edge and remain calm during certain stress related situations.

Use something 100% natural, all human grade and non-habit forming.

If your dog is noise phobic, thunder, has trouble in the car while traveling or air freighted, or experiences nervous situations.