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Bovine Colostrum.

Journal of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association - July 1999, Volume 18, Number 2, pp 38-39 - Institute of colostrum research (ICR).

What is colostrum.

It is the protein-rich yellowish-fluid as milk produced in lactation by mammals the first 24 hours or so after birth, is Mother Nature's gift as super-foods.

Not only is it nutritious, but it contains immune and growth factors, enzymes, proteins, and many other beneficial substances.

Scientific evidence - proved that colostrum in milk boosts and balances the immune system.

The exciting thing about Bovine Colostrum is that research has shown that new-borns aren't the only ones that are helped by colostrum.

Bovine colostrum is not species specific, so dogs (and other mammals including humans) can greatly benefit from it.

Bovine colostrum as supplement.

Claims abound for bovine colostrum's ability to treat allergies, bacterial, or viral infections; autoimmune diseases; digestive problems; and even cancer in other dogs.

While it is not a cure all product, it' is natural and a holistic modality to keep at hand to aid animals when they get into trouble resulting in dramatic changes for the better in ill animals once given colostrum.

Looking at the benefits of colostrum;

As a natural nutritional supplement.

As treatment for medical conditions.

The mother dog only supplies colostrum to her pups at birth and the pups then get 60% of their antibody protection via the placenta and 40% from the mother's milk during the first two days after birth with antibodies and other immune system enhancers to protect the newborn puppies.

Bovine colostrum contains more than 250 beneficial substances, from simple nutritional elements such as protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals, to more complex material such as lactoferrin, transfer factors, growth factors, and immunoglobulins or antibodies.

Bovine colostrum's intrinsic value is that the ingredients are all together (the full package) in the only food the puppies are offered during the first 2 days of life.

Colostrum is the first product that many animal naturopaths and true holistic veterinarians will reach for when a dog presents with gastrointestinal problems such as diarrhoea.

With a diet change and the addition of colostrum (instead of antibiotics), it has been found that most diarrhoea will resolve using colostrum as nutrition and as a medicine.

In addition to resolving the immediate problem, colostrum is believed to actually help heal the intestinal tract and keep it healthy.

Colostrum is also very useful for treating immune problems, whether they are caused by an under-active immune system leaving a dog open to infection, or a hyperactive immune system causing autoimmune diseases.

The "proline-rich polypeptides" help balance the "thymus gland". {The thymus gland is the main organ of the lymphatic system. Located in the upper chest region, the primary function of this gland is to promote the development of specific cells of the immune system called T lymphocytes}.

The thymus gland is chiefly responsible for directing the activity of the entire immune system, a balanced thymus gland can translate to a balanced immune system.

Colostrum naturally enhances and helps in tissue repair.

Problems with joints and connective tissue, such as hip dysplasia, degenerative arthritis, or cruciate ligament issues, have also improved with colostrum supplementation.

It appears that joint-related problems, that originally were helped with glucosamine and then declined, **improved** when they were given colostrum.

From research, it appears that IgF, is essential for the utilization of the glucosamine, and without adequate amounts of it, the continued use of glucosamine does not respond.

You see, without growth factors, all the chondroitin in the world won't help, if the body can't replicate cells, then it can't heal.

The growth factors in colostrum can and do facilitate the body's own regenerative processes and even better utilize supplements such as chondroitin and glucosamine.

Topical use of bovine colostrum.

Colostrum also really performs very well when applied topically.

It can be applied as a paste to virtually any skin problem such as abscesses, hot spots, wounds, or surgical incisions.

It has been found that a dog's need for any particular supplement they are on can be reduced or eliminated, once they have been on colostrum for several weeks.

This is most likely due to the increase in efficiency in the absorption of substances from the gut, better efficiency of tissue repair from the growth factors, and a healthier immune system from the immunoglobulin and other immune factors provided by the colostrum.

It is important to give colostrum ample time to work.

While some people might see nearly immediate improvement, this isn't always the case, particularly with chronic illness.

It is recommended that you allow at least one month for every year the dog has been ill to really see an improvement.

Please be aware that all colostrum is not created equal and should be evaluated before use.

Research has shown that in order to have the best effect, it should be from a dairy, where there is no use of hormones, antibiotics, nuclear contamination, or pesticides.

It should be prepared without freezing and excessive heat. It should be water soluble, and in a powder form.

Free pasture-fed herds are the preferred source of colostrum. These herds produce colostrum that contains more beneficial enzymes, which assist in the assimilation of the colostrum, and is a more diversified immune source.