

Puppies to Performance, Everyday Companions to Senior Pets: Getting The Most Out Of Your Pet's Life

"I bring 3 Bernese Mountain Dogs for chiropractic care. My 12 1/2 year old and 8 year old geriatric dogs go monthly and the treatments greatly assist them in having a good quality of life! My puppy has had one treatment so far". (A recent client comment on Facebook)

For most people the value of our canine companion is quite high and it's a relationship that we wish to maintain for as long as possible. In seeking that longevity the owner also strives to ensure that their pet will have a good quality of life.

Pet owners are often concerned with having the best food available, getting the exercise and mental stimulation that their companion needs, and will bring them in for routine health checkups. As part of a pet's routine healthcare, however, many owners are unaware that chiropractic for animals exists and that it can play a vital role in many aspects of companion health in ways that also improve the longevity and quality of life during the life span of their animal. This includes companion animals from puppies to senior pets as well as the show and performance animals. Be it preventative care, quality of life care, or rehab after injury or surgery there are benefits for all who pursue chiropractic care for their companion animals!

For starters let's review briefly what chiropractic care is as it's based on a few premises whether it is for a person or a pet:

1. The nervous system controls the whole body and tells it what to do from muscles and joints to internal organs like the heart lungs and immune system. The spine houses the nervous system with communication coming out at all levels from neck to the low back.
2. When there is a disturbance in the spine such as the joints not moving or not being aligned correctly, it affects the nerves in that area of the body and causes a breakdown in function that may lead to illness or injury either immediately or later over time. It is important to note that the initial disturbance may not be seen and may not have symptoms but over time symptoms may develop.

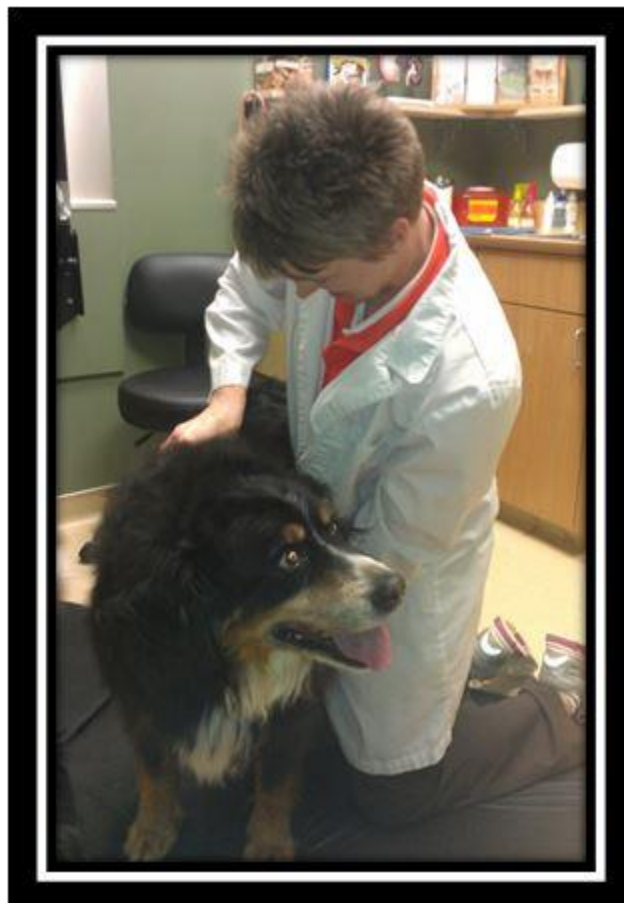
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3. The upset can come from natural activities of life, stepping wrong, falls, stress, chemicals, and much more.
4. The body has the ability to heal itself.
5. Chiropractic care restores the alignment and proper movement of the spine which will help the body restore itself and operate at optimal levels of function and health.

DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Chiropractic care for pets is very safe and gentle when performed by a properly trained professional. From puppies through the life span of the seniors; pets enjoy receiving chiropractic care and are very relaxed after their treatment. Many people believe that they will hear “cracking and popping” when their pet is treated. The animals do not crack and pop, which in humans is the mere release of gas in the joints. Instead, they will lick their lips in a neurological response to their treatment. Any chiropractic treatment applied is contacting a specific joint in a specific direction in order to restore the mobility and neurological input to the body so it can work better. By the way, in case you are wondering, the pet is not lying on a table when they receive chiropractic care but standing or sitting and sometimes lying down.



WHO BENEFITS FROM CHIROPRACTIC CARE?

From pet owners who start early with their puppies in order to maintain overall health throughout their life to senior pets with pain and arthritis, chiropractic care for pets is used for a variety of reasons and is a benefit in the majority of animals. Chiropractic care can help speed recovery for the companion animals that have had surgery or are suffering from an injury. On the other hand, one does not need

to see symptoms in order to have benefits from chiropractic care.

WELLNESS OR ASYMPTOMATIC CARE is for pet owners seeking to prevent future problems. This is much like doing regular oil changes in a car instead of waiting until a gasket is blown. There are no symptoms for these pets but the benefits of this type of care are:

- Injury prevention by maintaining proper biomechanical functioning.
- Overall health because chiropractic care boosts the immune system and maintains optimal functioning of the internal systems.
- Reduced healthcare costs during the life of the pet.
- A healthy and happy pet over their life span.

One example of this type of care is puppies. The birthing process can be a traumatic and stressful event. During that process the spine can suffer from disturbances. In the long term these undetected disturbances can lead to dysfunctional patterns of development and may even cause an injury or degenerative joint changes later on in life. Setting their bodies on a good path will ensure good health and prevent injuries.

Another example of this type of care is show dogs and performance animals. Chiropractic care will enhance athletic performance and improve conformation. Performance times will improve and in both the show ring and the agility course judges note these animals as having a nice fluid movement. Additional benefits are injury prevention during performance activities because having a properly aligned and moving body will reduce the likelihood of a dysfunctional movement pattern leading to injury. Additionally, in the event that there is an injury chiropractic care helps to speed recovery time and decreases pain. Even if the canine companion does nothing more than play catch in the yard they are an athletic animal who can be helped with regular chiropractic care.

As these beloved companions age and participate in their life events, the undetected and untreated alignments and restrictions of the spine which are often not seen can lead to arthritis, back and neck problems and other conditions which can be quite painful for your pet. Chiropractic care is beneficial in the aging pets to control pain and slow further degeneration. It has also been noted to improve energy and mobility helping them to more fully enjoy their senior years.

SINCE MY PET CAN'T TALK, HOW CAN I TELL IF MY COMPANION NEEDS CHIROPRACTIC CARE? This is the number one question about chiropractic care and pets. Pets do talk; they just do it through their actions and body language. Here are some signs that may be noted:

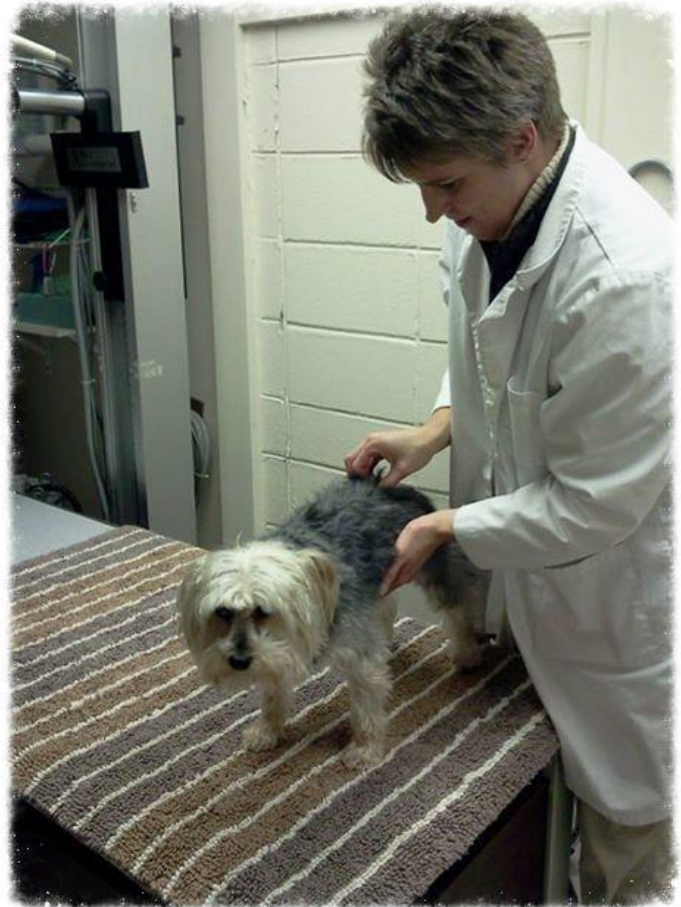
- Has there been an injury or trauma?
- Are there changes in movement or gait (limping, walking to one side)?
- Are there changes in posture (hunchback, sitting on one side)?
- Is there stiffness or weakness (difficulty moving from various positions, maneuvering stairs or sliding on non-carpeted surfaces)?
- Is there a decreased performance in athletic ability?
- Are there changes in behavior, mood, or appetite?
- Is there a diagnosis from your veterinarian?

Arthritis

Disc problems / Neck and Back

Soft tissue injuries: Muscle or ligaments.

- Does your pet have problems chewing or dropping food?
- Is your pet sensitive to touch along the spine with petting?
- Does your pet have accidents in the house with bowel and bladder control?
- Do you want to maintain a happy healthy pet?



BENEFITS OF CHIROPRACTIC that pets experience and have been seen and reported by their owners are:

- The pet is more comfortable with a decrease in pain and muscle spasm.
- The pet is moving better and has improved range of motion.
- The pet has won their “Best of Breed” in show events or has better time in their athletic event.
- The pet has better bladder or bowel control or improved control of other internal organs.
- The pet has increased energy and better mood or temperament.

There are many benefits for your pet receiving chiropractic care. No matter what health goals you have for your pet or what stage of life your pet is in, it is never too late to help them carry out the remainder of their life comfortably and happily with chiropractic care.

"Dr. Becca was a life and heart saver. Our 14 year old dog, Ashlee, would have had a painful and short life if it was not for Dr. Becca. We would have lost our dear Ashlee at least a year earlier than we did if she had not come into our lives. Instead, Ashlee's last 12 months were comfortable, active, and possible because of Dr. Becca. The heartache of losing our dog was postponed and she lived a quality life up until her last hours" -Kellie M.



Frequently Asked Questions About Chiropractic Care:

Is chiropractic care expensive?

No, chiropractic care is very cost effective especially calculated out over the long term. One of my clients had her senior pet treated 1-2 times a week for a whole year and it was less than the cost of back surgery with rehabilitation. That is a more aggressive treatment protocol. The range in Minnesota, during 2013, for initial small animal visits (dogs and cats) is between \$65-\$125. The initial visit usually entails a history examination and treatment. Subsequent visits range between \$45-\$65. For large animal (horses) initial visits range between \$105-\$125 and \$65-\$105 for subsequent visits. Generally once a condition is resolved the recommended maintenance visits in my office is approximately one month which serves much like an oil change to prevent bigger injuries and costs over the long term.

How do I find a chiropractor that is certified to work on animals?

There are multiple ways to find certified chiropractors:

- **MN Board of Chiropractic Examiners under the registration of Animal Chiropractors:** (these are the chiropractors only not vets who have training). Please note if you see a chiropractor for the care of your pet, they MUST BE on this list AND get a veterinary referral prior to treating your pet, as the requirement by the Minnesota State Law.

www.mn-chiroboard.state.mn.us/Animal%20Chiropractic%20Interim%20List.htm

- **Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association:** This list is not all inclusive as it is not a requirement to be on this list:

www.mvma.org/pdf/Animal%20Chiropractors2011.pdf

- **Minnesota Animal Chiropractic Care:** Not a required list so not all inclusive

www.mnanimalchiro.org/

- **American Veterinary Chiropractic Association:** Not a required list so not all inclusive

www.animalchiropractic.org/

- **The various animal chiropractic Institution websites:**

a. Healing Oasis Wellness Center

www.healingoasis.edu/documents/VSMT_Professionals.pdf

b. Options for Animals: www.optionsforanimals.com/

c. Parker Chiropractic College:

www.parker.edu/animal=chiropractic=attendees/

- **Google, Facebook, Referrals:** Ask your friends and people you trust!

Is the care the same for all animals or is designed to meet each individual pet's needs?

While there are many similarities using chiropractic care from patient to patient chiropractic treatment at its best is designed to meet each individual pet's needs. Keep in mind this also varies based on which provider you choose.

Is chiropractic care coordinated with the other care that my veterinarian provides?

In the State of Minnesota if the provider you choose is not a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine certified in animal chiropractic and is a Doctor of Chiropractic with the certification, there must be a veterinarian referral prior to the provider seeing your pet. This is usually an easy process. It is designed to protect and coordinate your pet's care so that they get the best. The level of additional coordination is going to depend on the provider that you choose but it's always better if there is communication between the two professionals to maintain continuity of care for your pet.

