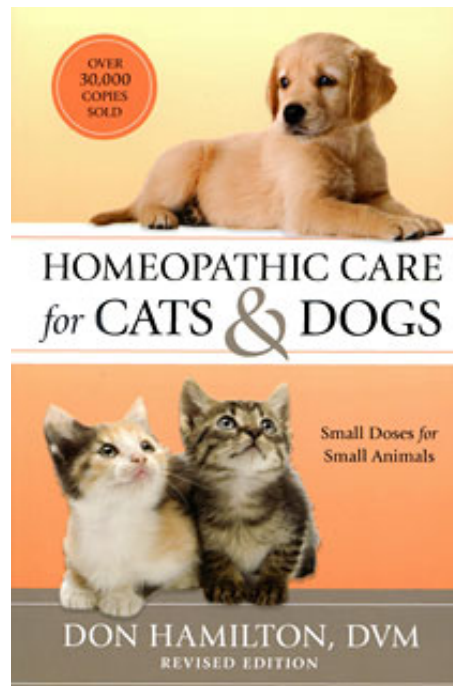


Don Hamilton

Homeopathic Care for Cats and Dogs

Reading excerpt
[Homeopathic Care for Cats and Dogs](#)
of [Don Hamilton](#)

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Chapter Thirteen

NERVOUS SYSTEM



Function

Degenerative Myelopathy (DM)

Coonhound Paralysis

Tick Paralysis

Vestibular Syndrome

Convulsions (Seizures)

 Tail Chasing and Back Quivering

Aggression and the Rabies Miasm; Ketamine-induced Aggression

Injuries to the Brain and Spinal Cord

Function

The nervous system provides two general functions. The first is sensory, in that the nerves allow us to detect and understand the world around us. Input from any of our five senses is carried to the brain by the sensory nerves. The brain is basically a giant mass of nerve tissue that processes the information, and once the information is analyzed, the brain initiates appropriate action in response. Information directing the bodily response (the second function) is delivered to the appropriate location by motor nerves; these nerves carry an electrical impulse away from the brain that directs a part of the body to carry out a needed action. This action may be movement of a muscle or a set of muscles, or it may be a glandular secretion of a hormone that then directs other organs to react. For example, if you put your hand on a hot stove burner, your sensory nerves quickly respond and give your brain the message, *hot*, and then your motor nerves initiate two actions: you jerk your hand away, and at the same time you probably yell "ow!"

The nervous system is quite complex, since it is basically the computer that runs our body. No action or sensation is possible without this system, making it an essential system for life. By the same token, its potential for malfunction is equally vast. Most of these conditions are beyond the scope of this book, so I have chosen to focus this chapter upon a few disease syndromes and upon injuries.

Degenerative Myelopathy (DM)

This is a syndrome that mainly affects dogs and most commonly affects large breeds. The condition first appeared in German shepherd dogs, but these days most other large breeds are affected as well. The primary picture is one of a paralysis of the hind legs that grows progressively worse with time. Ultimately, the dog may lose control of bladder and bowel function. There is no pain, as the problem is a loss of function of the spinal cord due to destruction of the cord tissue. It is thus easy to differentiate between this condition and other conditions that may cause weakness or stumbling, such as a slipped disc, hip dysplasia, or arthritis.

The cause is not known, but it is an autoimmune disease, so I suspect vaccinations as a cause or trigger in some cases. Distemper vaccination is a likely possibility, as it is in the same virus family as the measles virus, which has been connected to multiple sclerosis (MS) in humans. MS is basically the same disease as DM. Whereas the disease occurred primarily in older

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dogs when I first graduated from veterinary school, today it often affects young dogs and occasionally even cats.

If you suspect your dog may have this problem, have a veterinarian check her to verify the diagnosis or to see if there may be another problem. The condition is not urgent or life-threatening, but obtain all the information you can before deciding upon treatment.

General Care for Degenerative Myelopathy

There is no conventional treatment, and to my knowledge even holistic therapies provide minimal help. There are some homeopathic remedies, however, that may help slow the progression of the disease if not reverse the symptoms. I recommend seeking expert help if possible, but I will list some remedy choices for those without access to help. Antioxidants may help minimize the damage, though they won't reverse or stop the disease. Give vitamin C (5-10 mg/pound, two to three times a day, use natural C if available), vitamin E (5-10 mg/pound, once a day, mixed tocopherols), and vitamin A (75-100 IU, once a day). Other antioxidants include coenzyme Q₁₀ (1-2 mg/pound, one to two times a day), superoxide dismutase (SOD), (2,000 IU or 125 micrograms per ten pounds daily), and pycnogenol (1-2 mg/pound, twice a day). Use one or two of these in addition to the above antioxidant vitamins. Lecithin may help maximize the transmission of nerve impulses; give one-half to one teaspoon per ten pounds daily. Phosphatidylserine may also help; here give 1-2 mg per pound, two or three times daily.

Homeopathic Medicines for Degenerative Myelopathy

Alumina

Aluminum has been implicated in many conditions, including nerve damage. The homeopathic remedy is called *Alumina*, and it has a reputation for helping some paralyzes, especially if there is constipation accompanying the weakness. The stool is often very dry, and there is little urging. The skin may be dry as well, and you may see flakes of skin under the coat. These animals may improve and then worsen on a daily basis.

Argentum nitricum

Argentum nitricum is another remedy made from a metal compound (silver nitrate), and it may also be of assistance when there is a paralysis of the hind limbs, especially if the limbs tremble. Animals needing this remedy

often have diarrhea with a lot of flatulence. They crave sugar and sweets, but sugar may worsen their ailments. They are often prone to anxiety and fears and may prefer to stay at home rather than go for a walk, although they prefer cool, open air and dislike warmth and warm rooms. They may also have difficulty with their tongues, and food may fall from their mouths while eating.

Cocculus

Animals needing this remedy may have a lot of trembling and even some spasms in their legs. They may have a history of car sickness, and riding in a car will often worsen the paralysis of the legs. They may have abdominal pain and bloating as an accompanying symptom. They often become nauseated easily, especially when seeing or smelling foods. These dogs tend to be mentally very slow and dull, or they may become so as the condition develops.

Conium maculatum

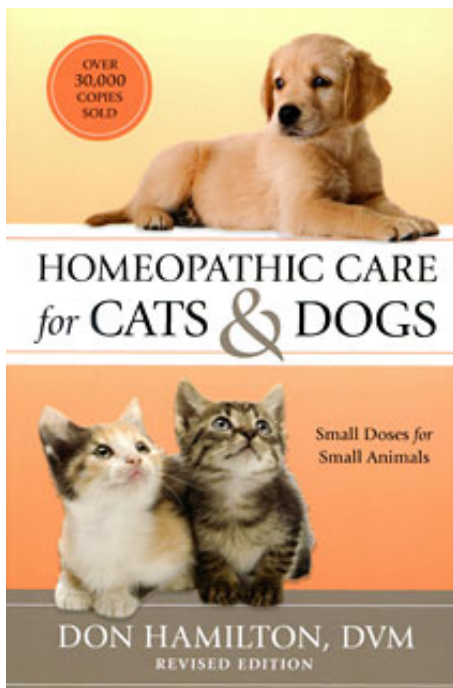
This remedy is made from poison hemlock, the substance Socrates drank as his death sentence. Poison hemlock causes painless paralysis that starts in the legs and moves upward until the arms are paralyzed and ultimately the respiration and heartbeat are stopped. In animals needing this remedy, we see a similar effect, as the weakness begins in the rear legs but slowly moves upward. These animals may have severe nausea that comes on as soon as they lie down (all conditions tend to be worse when *Conium* animals rest). This is a good remedy to consider for degenerative myelopathy, especially in older animals.

Gelsemium

Weakness, heaviness, tiredness, and sluggishness in various parts of the body suggest *Gelsemium*. Even the eyelids may droop on these dogs. There is mental dullness as well, though there is also anxiety. These dogs may be quite fearful of going out and may develop diarrhea easily as a result. They often prefer to be left alone. The weakness often comes on after a bout with another illness, though it may also result from grief.

Kali phosphoricum

Potassium salts are often helpful in nerve weaknesses, and *Kali phos* is the



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