

Jennifer A. Coscia

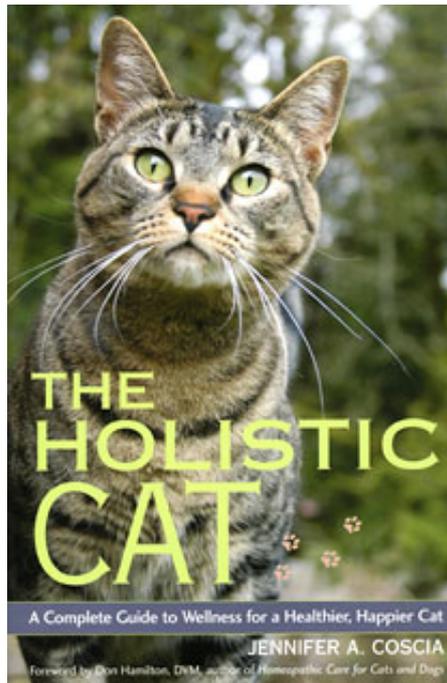
The Holistic Cat

Reading excerpt

[The Holistic Cat](#)

of [Jennifer A. Coscia](#)

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years I have seen too many homeless, diseased, abused, and neglected animals, the majority of which were cats and kittens. Writing a book on disease prevention and wellness for cats is my way of giving back to all of you who have opened your hearts and homes to receive these very special creatures. I also wish to share with you my passion for helping to eradicate the ever-growing problem of homeless, unwanted pets. I truly believe that, through community effort, education, spaying/neutering, and adoption programs, this mission will succeed.

I am a holistic nutritional consultant and author of *The Fat Elimination and Detox Program (FED): A Holistic Approach to Disease Prevention and Weight Loss*. I also own and operate a rescue and adoption agency called The Animal Rescue and Adoption Agency, Inc. (TARAA). With the aid of Petco Corporation, we have placed hundreds of homeless animals into deserving homes. TARAA is a non-profit/no-kill organization that relies heavily on a foster care program and outside donations.

It is only recently, after the loss of two of my adult cats, that I began to question conventional veterinary medicine. They both died of cardiomyopathy (heart disease), which was possibly vaccine related. Baby, a handsome white domestic-shorthair male, was only four years old; and Silver, a silver Maine coon mix, was barely two. These cats were far too young to die. Baby was vaccinated annually, and Silver had received all his vaccines just three months before he died. Their deaths prompted my research into vaccine-related illnesses in cats, and I will share my findings with you later in this book.

I have been involved with animal rescue (of cats in particular) for the past seventeen years, and I must tell you I have seen it all. I've seen cats hurled from cars, thrown from bridges, burned alive

(and survived), ripped apart by dogs, drowned in pools, and born with severe deformities including backward feet. I even had two five-week-old kittens who had ridden from Miami to Jacksonville in the wheel well of an eighteen-wheeler. I have rescued kittens that were born in walls, in condemned buildings, inside a flooded drain-pipe under a road, on a boat, and even in the engine of a truck in a wrecking yard. As part of TARAA's mission to reduce the numbers of unwanted or homeless cats, we've dwindled down several feral cat colonies by adopting out the adoptable cats and spaying/neutering the remaining ones. So far, the journey has been bittersweet, but we have had more joy than sorrow, I am happy to say. My husband says that the best therapy for anything that troubles you is to sit on the floor in a room full of kittens. Their antics will surely put a smile on your face.

Growing up, my family always had a bit of a zoo—at one point we had six indoor cats and three dogs. I am sure we vaccinated them at some point in their lives but nowhere near to the extent of the recommended vaccine protocols of today—veterinarians now recommend up to three to four vaccines before a kitten reaches four months of age. (I have personally buried many kittens that became sick after immunization, probably because they were immune-suppressed to begin with and never should have been vaccinated. I will discuss this topic more later on.) Most of my family's pets lived well into their teens. I can recall very few visits to the vet because our animals just didn't get sick—at least not until they were approaching their senior years—unlike the pets of today.

Many animals these days suffer chronic conditions like allergy problems, joint problems, intestinal difficulties, kidney and urinary tract issues, thyroid disorders, heart disease, and, finally, cancer. In fact, one of the leading diseases in cats is cancer, and I am shocked each time I hear from adopters that they just had to put their cat down due to this disease. Cringing, I ask them how old the cat was and their reply is heart breaking. You would expect that the cat had been in its

senior years, but too often I hear it was less than nine years old. I also frequently hear that a cat died of old-age-related illness at the age of ten or twelve years, while according to the Humane Society the average life expectancy for an indoor cat in the United States is supposed to be seventeen plus years.

What has changed so drastically in the last twenty or so years? And why do we see so much disease today? My theory is that the overuse of vaccines and drugs in veterinary care, along with the multitude of chemicals and contaminants that are added to pet foods and our water supply, is slowly killing our cats. Diet too plays a crucial role in the health and life expectancy of our cats. The Humane Society also stated that a cat today lives more than double the life expectancy of that of a cat from eighty years ago. But take a look at the state our country was in during the f 930s and 1940s. Times were tough; we were in the midst of a depression followed by war, and food was scarce for all—let alone cats. So, logically speaking, cats today should live at least double the life expectancy of the felines of yesteryear as food is no longer scarce.

While studying for my nutrition degree, I had the opportunity to take a few classes on the care of domestic pets, and one of the required readings was *Homeopathic Care for Cats and Dogs* by Don Hamilton, DVM. This book opened my eyes to the epidemic of chronic illness and the overuse of vaccines in pets today. Since then, I have seen first-hand the truths I learned in my courses, and I have an overwhelming need to share this information with you.

I must also say that I am not writing this book to "bash" conventional medicine. On the contrary, actually, I will praise conventional medicine and give credit where credit is due; however, I believe that conventional medicine combined with holistic medicine is the best form of health care for your cat. This unique combination is called complementary medicine and simply means that each complements the other (I will explain complementary medicine in more detail throughout this book).

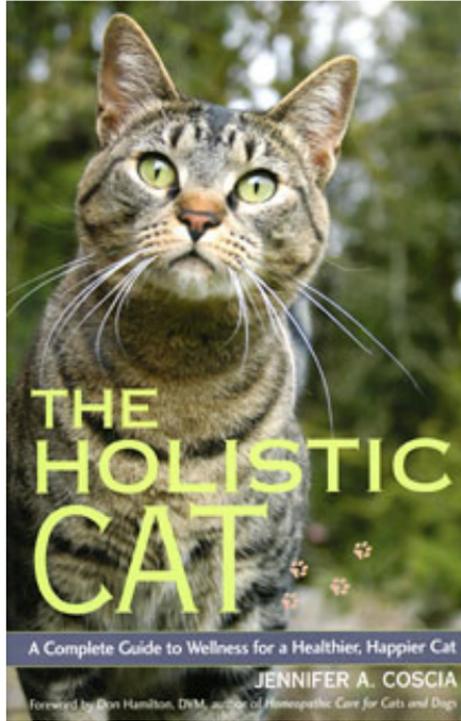
You obviously care a great deal about your pet; otherwise, you probably wouldn't have purchased this book. With this in mind, I will tell you how I got started on this path and share with you my experiences.

The First Rescue

In June of 1990 I was riding a bicycle around our Long Island neighborhood with my daughter, Arielle. As we rode down a street in a nearby development where a vacant wooded lot remained, we noticed a large box in the middle of the lot and immediately decided to investigate. The box contained only a dirty food dish, an empty bowl (I assumed it was once used for water), and a filthy towel. Suddenly, Arielle shrieked with joy as she spotted seven young kittens playing on a nearby log. I didn't see a mama cat anywhere nearby, so I deduced that the kittens had been abandoned without their mother. This was to be my first rescue/trapping experience.

The kittens were scared to death and all of them scattered into the woods as we approached, but, over the next two days, we worked hard to successfully trap every one. Though they appeared to be in pretty good shape, I knew we couldn't keep them since we already had a bit of a zoo. Thus, I called the North Shore Animal League in Port Washington, New York. They were very helpful as they already had me on file from my previous adoption of a wonderful dog named Frisco. They advised me to socialize the kittens—which meant to make them friendly—and then bring them to their shelter for placement in their adoption program. Naturally, we fell in love with all the kittens, but, in particular, a beautiful Russian blue we called Smokey. We ended up keeping just Smokey and later found out that all remaining kittens went to good homes within one week (thanks to the North Shore Animal League).

Over the years we continued our animal rescue efforts in several states, and our zoo rapidly expanded so that our pets outgrew our home. Because my husband Michael is an engineer, we moved quite



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