

Colostrum Nature's Pet Superfood

by Dr. Matthew J. Heller



“It matters not if medicine is old or new, so long as it can cure,” is an adage that frequently applies to holistic medicine. Many successful holistic treatments—acupuncture, homeopathy and herbal remedies among them—have their roots in practices of earlier generations. The use of bovine colostrum as a nutritional supplement is another such example.

What is Colostrum?

After a dog, cat or any mammal gives birth and begins to nurse its offspring, colostrum, or ‘first milk’, comprises the newborn’s first meal. In subsequent days, even when the mother’s regular milk supply develops, colostrum, which is rich in proteins and antibodies, remains an integral component of her milk.

Colostrum is key to early development, offering a critical defense against the viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites to which newborns are constantly exposed. At birth, the immature immune system is particularly vulnerable to threats from the environment. The naturally occurring substances in colostrum—immunoglobulins, antibodies and antioxidants—both support the immune system and aid in healthy renewal of cells.

Although animals typically cease to partake of the benefits of colostrum once they are weaned from their mother, science has discovered that bovine colostrum can serve as a universal boon to our furry companions. It is readily available and easily administered to pets in capsule, tablet or powder form.

How Bovine Colostrum Helps

Bovine colostrum contains growth factors, immune factors, enzymes, hormones and micronutrients, all of which promote a pet’s ability to heal when it faces illness. Prior to the development of modern antibiotics and sulfa medications, colostrum was regularly used by doctors to treat animals’ immune problems.

Renowned holistic veterinarian Stephen Blake has championed the use of bovine colostrum for pets for the past decade, calling it “Nature’s forgotten miracle.” Specifically, bovine colostrum may be able to help in the following situations:

➤ **SUPPORTING GERIATRIC PETS** as they experience diminishing growth factors, the proteins capable of stimulating cellular growth. Colostrum’s growth factors—epithelial growth factor (EGF) and insulin-like growth factor (IGF)—bolster the immunity of aging animals.

➤ **TREATING GASTROINTESTINAL ISSUES** such as diarrhea and bloating. Consuming colostrum helps calm the digestive track and regulate the bowels. It also minimizes damage to the intestinal lining from parasites, fungi and medications, because its growth factors promote regeneration of the intestinal lining.

➤ **PREVENTING BACTERIAL AND VIRAL ILLNESSES** by interfering with a toxin’s ability to attach to host cells, multiply and spread infection. Several components of colostrum aid in this task, including Immunoglobulin A (IgA, an antibody); lactoferrin (a protein with antimicrobial activity); and lactoperoxidase (an antimicrobial, antioxidant enzyme).

➤ **TREATING SKIN ISSUES** due to allergies or wounds. Colostrum speeds the regeneration of healthy skin with its growth factors and helps alleviate inflammation.

➤ **REDUCING RECOVERY TIME** after an illness. Colostrum’s growth factors, which aid in stabilizing immune response, may shorten the term of an illness by nearly 50 percent. Veterinarians often prescribe sickly puppies and kittens a colostrum supplement to boost their overall immunity.

➤ **TREATING LEAKY GUT SYNDROME.** A ‘leaky gut’ allows toxins and large food molecules to escape the intestinal wall and leak into the bloodstream, causing autoimmune or allergic responses. Treating the syndrome with colostrum helps restore and repair damaged intestinal tissues.

Today, the age-old use of colostrum as a holistic preventive and healing treatment is enjoying newfound respect, as forward-thinking practitioners recognize its many benefits. This power-packed first milk provides valuable immune support for small animals, particularly cats and dogs suffering from allergies, gastrointestinal disorders, skin problems, cancer, arthritis and autoimmune diseases.

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