

Herbs Are Vitamins Too!

by Olga McDonald

Many of you do not have a lot of knowledge about herbs or herbal medicine. What little you might know was probably put into your head by propaganda against herbs. There's a lot of that going on since herbs cannot be patented and no one person or company can monopolize the profits from the promotion and sales of herbs. But if you knew that about 50% of prescription drugs are either directly derived from plants (herbs are plants) or contain chemical imitations of plant compounds, would that change your mind about them or peak your interest to find out more? I hope so because it's true.

Herbal medicine has been around for thousands of years and their uses and benefits are well documented and have withstood the test of time. But now I would like to focus on the nutritional, and not the healing, aspects of herbs. What most people don't know is that herbs are a great, natural source of vitamins, which include antioxidants, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, fiber, proteins, sugars, carbohydrates, chlorophyll, trace elements, essential fatty acids and other beneficial compounds. And because Nature has produced them, they are balanced and easily assimilable.

The two key words here are 'balanced' and 'assimilable'. With synthetic vitamin/mineral supplements, we rely on the manufacturer to put in the proper balance of, let's say, calcium and phosphorus. If they don't, it could cause problems. Research has proven that an excess of a single vitamin or mineral can cause the same symptoms as a deficiency of that same vitamin or mineral. But with foods and herbs Nature already has everything balanced.

Synthetic supplements are made in laboratories from certain chemicals that copy their counterparts found in Nature. Although there are no major differences between vitamins created in the lab and those found in food, vitamins found in food do not contain unnatural substances like preservatives, artificial colors, sugar, starch, coal tar and other harmful additives and fillers that are found in some supplements. But, then again, a substance labeled natural may contain vitamins that have not been extracted from natural food sources. Vitamin and mineral supplements that are not bonded to proteins do not work as effectively as those that are. Vitamins and minerals in foods and herbs are bonded to proteins which means they are better absorbed, utilized and retained.

We, and our pets, are living beings and need live, nutritious foods to sustain life. Alfalfa, for example, is extremely nutritious. Alfalfa means "father of all foods" and is said to contain all the vitamins and minerals known to man, as well as having the highest content of chlorophyll of any plant and is one of the best sources of protein. Dandelion has a higher vitamin A content than carrots. Kelp contains nearly 30 minerals. Couchgrass, that your pets will seek out naturally if they can find it, is rich in vitamins A, C, and B complex and high in silicon and potassium. Granted, vitamin/mineral supplements have higher quantities in them than in herbs, but aren't as balanced, assimilable or as safe. Remember, more is not necessarily better. Please don't misunderstand me. Any vitamin/mineral supplement, synthetic or natural, is a start in the right direction, especially if you or your pets aren't taking one now. But with a good herbal blend, (herbs work better in blends than individually), you get all those nutrients plus the benefits of the herbs healing powers. So try a good herbal blend for your pets and see what happens. Nature won't let you down.