

# Homeopathy for animals



In these extracts from *Francis Hunter's* forthcoming book, we look at the treatment of respiratory conditions

**I**t is essential to remember that it is our responsibility, as the keepers of animals, to consider at all times their health, comfort and general wellbeing. The remedies suggested in this article are for the most part general treatments for immediate use and for use when the disease or condition is not serious or life threatening. They are also useful for more chronic problems when prolonged treatment may be required.

Good living conditions and plenty of Tender Loving Care are just as important and necessary in the treatment of animals as they are with humans. Good nursing and careful attention to detail are as vital as drugs or homeopathic remedies in assisting the recovery from any illness or unwelcome condition.

Please note that for each condition described, there is clear guidance on whether you should seek veterinary advice before administering any homeopathic remedies.

## **Flu (Influenza)**

*Veterinary diagnosis and involvement is advisable. There are few conventional drugs on the market to treat viral infections; homeopathic remedies, carefully chosen to match the particular symptoms of a flu infection, can be very effective in alleviating the condition.*

Flu as we know it in the human occurs in rather a similar manner in both horses and cats, but uncommonly in other domestic animals.

Symptoms are variable, often sudden in onset, and include a high temperature, loss of appetite, coughing, sneezing, running eyes and nose and sometimes stiffness in the back and other joints. Dullness, shivering, increased rate of breathing and panting may also be apparent. The animal may show increased thirst.

- If flu is suspected give Aconite 30c 4 times at hourly intervals. Change to another remedy matching the presenting symptoms, once the diagnosis is confirmed.

- In acute cases where signs of fever are apparent: Belladonna 30c 4 times at hourly intervals and if improving every 4 hours for a further 3 to 5 days.

- If symptoms appear similar to human flu: Gelsemium 30c 4 times daily, every 4 hours for 3 to 5 days until symptoms subside.

- Flu symptoms plus a dry harsh cough brought on by movement: Bryonia 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 3 to 5 days.

- Respiration noticeably increased, short and gasping with niggling, tickling cough, worse in cold air: Phosphorus 30c 3 to 4 times daily for 3 to 5 days.

- Streaming eyes, appears hot and thirsty, throat often

affected too: Allium cepa 30c 4 times daily, every 4 hours, for 3 to 5 days.

- Painful joints, stiffness, restlessness; eased by slight movement: Rhus tox 6c 4 times daily for a few days until symptoms subside.

## **Cat Flu (Feline Influenza)**

*Immediate veterinary attention is required. The disease is caused by viruses, usually complicated by a secondary, mixed bacterial infection. The viruses involved are feline calicivirus (FCH) and feline viral tracheitis (FVR), also known as feline herpes virus (FHV). Cat Flu may be due to a single virus or to a combination of both. FVR causes the more serious condition.*

Main symptoms, similar to those of human flu, with sneezing and running eyes and nose. The discharge may be clear and watery to start with and, as the infection progresses, it becomes thick and yellow in colour. There can be a high temperature, loss of appetite, coughing and ulcers in the mouth. In cases of FVR infection, deaths may occur from dehydration and bronchopneumonia. Those who recover may become persistent "snufflers". The signs of FCV are usually less severe, but include ulceration on the tongue, palate and nose area. FVR cases may show ulcers on the cornea of ➤



one or both eyes.

Conventional vaccines to control this disease are widely used in breeding establishments and catteries with apparently few side effects.

Homeopathic nosodes are also available for the prevention (sometimes for the treatment, too) of cat flu. Their use and dosage regime should be discussed with a homeopathic vet. See also symptoms and medicine above.

### Catarrh

*Veterinary diagnosis may be required in the first instance. Homeopathic remedies are very useful if the condition becomes chronic.*

Catarrh, the term used to describe an inflammation of a mucous membrane accompanied by a free discharge, often accompanies infection and if not treated promptly may become chronic and difficult to overcome.

- Watery, acrid (stinging) discharge which makes the nostrils very sore, worse in cold air: Arsenicum album

30c 2 to 3 times daily for 5 to 7 days.

- Yellow discharge accompanied by infection and very sensitive to pressure or even touch in the region of the nose: Hepar sulphuricum 30c twice daily for 5 to 7 days. Repeat after a week if necessary.

- Discharge is thick, sticky, stringy and yellow or greenish-yellow in colour; crusts may form in the nose; useful in ongoing cases: Kali bichromicum 30c twice daily for 5 to 7 days. Repeat after a week if required.

- Chronic catarrh with mouth breathing; recurrent tonsillitis; discharge thick and white, sometimes with nose bleeding: Kali muraticum 6c twice daily for up to 4 to 8 weeks if necessary.

- Blockage of (mostly) right nostril; green scales in nostrils; much thick, yellow discharge in the morning: Pulsatilla 30c 3 to 4 times daily until improvement.

- For the chronic, persistent, longstanding case with a white, pus-like discharge: Silica 30c morning and evening for 5 to 10 days or longer if necessary.

### Sinusitis

*Veterinary diagnosis is advisable. Homeopathic remedies are useful to treat this condition, especially recurring cases.*

Sinusitis is the inflammation of the sinus. There are a number of different sinuses in the body, but the ones referred to in this article are the three bony cavities inside the skull. These are maxillary sinuses found in the cheeks on either side of the nose, the frontal sinuses, which are smaller, situated over the upper part of the eye socket and just above the base of the

nose, and the ethmoid sinuses which are placed at the back of the upper part of the nose.

The sinuses are lined with a moist mucous membrane – sinusitis occurs when the lining becomes inflamed and the cavity becomes filled with mucous discharge (catarrh). Sinusitis may be acute following an upper respiratory tract infection or else become chronic, after frequent bouts of inflammation. The colour and nature of any discharge produced can be very helpful in selecting the best remedy.

- Discharge is acrid and makes the nostrils very sore: Arsenicum album 30c once daily for 5 to 7 days.

- Infection present, nose region sensitive to pressure or touch: Hepar sulphuris 30c twice daily for 7 days.

- A useful remedy for ongoing cases with a thick string-like discharge: Kali bichromicum 30c twice daily for 5 days and repeat after a week if required.

- For the chronic longstanding case with a white pus-like discharge: Silica 30c morning and evening for 5 to 10 days.

- Thin watery discharge like white of egg; much sneezing; recurrent bouts of sinus infection; coughing may be apparent: Natrum muriaticum 30c 3 times daily 5 to 7 days until improved.

- Chronic sinusitis and catarrh with mouth breathing; recurrent tonsillitis; discharge thick and white, sometimes bleeding from the nose: Kali muriaticum 6c twice daily for up to 4 to 8 weeks.

- Particularly if the right nostril is blocked; green scales in nostrils; much thick, yellow discharge in the morning: Pulsatilla 30c 3 to 4 times daily until improved.

## Tonsillitis

*Veterinary diagnosis and/or treatment is advisable if the symptoms persist, or the animal is in apparent discomfort or pain.*

The tonsils' function is to act as the first line of defence if an infection enters the body through the mouth or nose. Less severe cases, if caught early, and chronic cases respond very well to homeopathic remedies without having to resort to antibiotics.

- Throat red and glowing; swallowing obviously painful; animal feels hot and feverish: Belladonna 6c or 30c every 2 to 3 hours up to 4 doses, then 4 times daily for a few days until improved.

- Sore throat; tongue appears swollen and is often coated yellow; increased thirst and salivation; offensive smell to the breath: Mercurius solubilis 6c or 30c 3 to 4 times daily for a few days until improved.

- Chronically infected tonsils; throat sensitive to touch, off colour and often irritable: Hepar sulphuris 6c or 30c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 7 days and repeat treatment when necessary.

- Frequent and chronic bouts of tonsillitis; tonsils and glands in the throat region always enlarged: Baryta carbonica 6c or 30c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 10 days. Repeat when required.

## Coughs

*Homeopathic remedies are very effective for treating coughs. Veterinary attention may be necessary if symptoms persist.*

There are many causes, such as irritant substances, smoke and fumes, but most coughs arise as the result of infection.

- The first treatment to consider is Aconite 30c every

hour for 4 doses before moving on to another indicated remedy.

- A good all-round remedy, if the cough is obviously worse for movement and warmth: Bryonia 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 3 to 7 days as required.

- If there is fever, sweating, excitement and a full pulse often accompanied by dilated pupils: Belladonna 30c 4 times daily for 5 to 7 days.

- Spasmodic cough, worse in the open air and accompanied by retching or vomiting sputum: Ipecacuanha 6c 4 to 6 times daily until improvement.

- Persistent, rattling cough, with phlegm which is difficult to bring up and wheezy chest noises: Antimonium tartaricum 6c 3 to 6 times daily until improved.

- For a spasmodic chronic type of cough with much retching and barking: Drosera 6c or 12c 3 to 4 times daily for several days.

- When the cough persists after an attack of bronchitis or pneumonia: Arsenicum iodatum 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 3 to 7 days until improved.

- For a tickling, hard, dry, persistent and obviously painful cough: Phosphorus 6c 4 times daily until relief.

## Kennel Cough (Infectious Canine Tracheobronchitis)

*Veterinary diagnosis is advisable.* Often developing during or following a visit to a boarding kennels, or to dog shows or anywhere else where dogs congregate, the principle organism causing kennel cough infection is the bacteria *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, but a number of different viruses may also be involved. In addition there may be a combined infection, further complicated by the presence of other bacteria,

leading to secondary infection.

The cough is usually an irritating, niggling dry and persistent one. A distinguishing feature of kennel cough is that it is little heard while the dog is still, but is brought on by any sort of movement.

The dog may not appear to be ill if the infection is a mild one and it may keep eating and behaving normally, except for some discomfort from the repeated bouts of coughing. In the more acute form of kennel cough the animal may be off its food and obviously ill with a temperature and running eyes and nose. Such a case needs to be examined by a vet, who may prescribe antibiotics to lessen the risk of bronchitis or pneumonia, especially in an older or weaker animal.

- In the mild case if the cough is accentuated by any kind of movement: Bryonia 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 7 days until improved.

- If the cough is dry, spasmodic and accompanied by retching; particularly if Bryonia is not helping after 2 or 3 days: Drosera 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 7 days.

- For the more severe case with breathing difficulties, wheezing and incessant coughing; worse in the open air and when accompanied by retching or bringing up of mucus: Ipecacuanha 6c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 7 days.

## Bronchitis

*Veterinary diagnosis is required. Homeopathic remedies can often be used beneficially on their own in chronic cases and also in conjunction with antibiotics in the very acute cases.* Bronchitis is an inflammation and probably also an infection of the bronchi and bronchioles that supply ➤

*Author Francis Hunter's two dogs, Dash (left) and Beamish*



air to the lungs. The airways become inflamed and swollen and also partially blocked with thick, fluid exudates. These further reduce their diameter and prevent sufficient oxygen reaching the lungs. The respiration rate increases with panting and possibly rasping noises, often accompanied by a troublesome cough.

- In the early stages: Aconite 30c every 15-30 minutes up to 6 to 8 doses.
- Follow with Belladonna 30c 4 times daily until improved if the animal is feverish and panting or sweating and obviously distressed.
- When any movement seems to worsen the condition and there is a dry nagging cough causing discomfort, increased thirst is usually noticeable: Bryonia 6c 4 times daily until improved.
- High fever, dry cough, wheezing respiration, extreme prostration, restlessness, great thirst: Arsenicum album 30c 3 to 4 times daily until improved.
- Useful in early cases with a deep, racking cough, which worsens in cold air: Phosphorus 6c 2 hourly up to 6 doses until improved.
- Rattling of mucus but little expectoration (coughing up), sweating, drowsiness and debility, rapid short, difficult breathing, gasping: Antimonium tartaricum 6c 4 times daily until improved.

For chronic cases when there is much discharge from the nose and mouth. Kali bichromicum 30c 3 times daily for as long as necessary.

**Pneumonia**  
Consult a veterinary surgeon at once if pneumonia is suspected. Delay may mean the death of the animal.

*Homeopathic treatment is effective and can be used in conjunction with conventional medicine.*

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs. There are a number of different types caused by infection with viruses or bacteria and has a sudden onset with raised temperature, noticeably increased pulse and respiration rate, panting, difficulty taking breath in, breathing heavy and gasping, loss of appetite and dullness are apparent. There may be a painful cough and a yellow (purulent) nasal discharge. In extreme cases a bluish tinge will be seen on the lips, the mucous membranes covering the gums and the tongue as the tissues become starved of oxygen. Collapse and death may soon follow if treatment is not started immediately.

- Any of the main symptoms above: Aconite 30c, in the early stages dose every 15-30 minutes up to 6 or 8 doses.
- Belladonna 6c 4 times daily until improved follows Aconite well if the animal is feverish and panting or sweating and obviously distressed.
- Any movement seems to worsen the condition and there is a dry nagging cough causing discomfort; increased thirst usually noticeable: Bryonia 6c 4 times daily until improved.
- Useful in early cases with a deep, racking cough, which worsens in cold air: Phosphorus 6c 2 hourly up to 6 doses until improved, then 4 times daily for 3 to 5 days if improvement maintained.
- Dry, paroxysmal cough, persistent and choking; pneumonia and pleurisy together; yellow discharge and possibly bleeding from

the mouth and nose: Drosera 12c or 30c 4 times daily until improved.

### **Pleurisy**

*Veterinary diagnosis and treatment required.*

Pleurisy (pleuritis) is an inflammation of the pleura, a membrane covering the surface of the lungs and also lining the rib cage. Main symptoms, superficial, rapid and difficult breathing, the chest wall is painful to the touch, and laboured abdominal breathing is apparent.

- In the early stages, difficulty breathing with the slightest movement: Aconite 30c every 15-30 minutes up to 6 or 8 doses.
- Any movement may be painful and there may be a dry nagging cough, thirst may also be increased: Bryonia 30c 4 times daily until improved.
- Apis 6c and Bryonia 6c may be given alternately if there is fluid present and breathing is hurried and difficult. Dose hourly using 2 doses of each remedy (4 doses in all). Then give 2 doses of each remedy, alternately, for a few days until improved.
- Rattling sounds with little coughing and difficulty breathing, rapid and short, grasping: Antimonium tartaricum 6c 4 times daily until improved.
- Dry, hoarse, choking cough, worse in cold, dry weather; wheezing, "asthmatic" breathing; chest definitely infected: Hepar sulphuris 6c or 30c 3 to 4 times daily for 5 to 7.

*This extract was taken from Everyday Homeopathy for Animals (£20) by Francis Hunter, Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd, March 2004.*

Francis Hunter MRCVS, VetFFHom was a founder member and vice president of the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons. He was Chairman of the BHA from November 1996 to July 2000. He is also the author of *People are Pets*.