Introduction and Guest Background

Hey, it's Nathan Crane, director of the Health and Healing Club and host of the Conquering Cancers Summit. And today, I am honored and excited to welcome you to a very special interview.

Gary Richter has been practicing veterinary medicine in the San Francisco Bay area since 1998. In addition to conventional veterinary medical training, doctor Richter certified in veterinary acupuncture as well as veterinary chiropractic.

As owner and medical director of Holistic Veterinary Care in Oakland, California, Doctor Richter understands the benefits of both conventional and holistic treatment methods for the preventative and therapeutic care of pets.

Doctor Richter focuses on the integration of holistic and general practice, veterinary medicine, regenerative medicine, as well as educating professionals and pet owners on the benefits of integrative care.

Doctor Richter's website is holistic Vet Caricom. Doctor Gary Richter, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you. I'm thrilled to be here. Yeah, honored to be having this conversation with you.

I think it's more important now than ever that we continue to learn what we can do for our pets, for the animals that we love, that are part of our family.

You know, I've been really dedicated to helping people, millions of people around the world for the last, eight years, nine years specifically with cancer.

And even, you know, I'm guilty in my own case of not really knowing enough about, taking care of of my pets, you know? And so I've been learning a lot through this event, and getting to connect with and learn from world leading experts.

Holistic, integrative veterinarians like yourself. And I'm really excited to, you know, not only learn more for myself and my family, but be able to share this information with everybody tuning in to to take care of our pets.

Because I think, one, there's not this information is not prevalent enough out there, I guess, in the mainstream. Right. And number two, this information can be lifesaving.

So I'd love for you to start a little bit. Give us a little bit of, foundational, on your background, a little bit of foundation information on, you know, what was it that kind of made you want to focus on holistic and integrative veterinary medicine rather than stay focused on just conventional medicine?

That's a great question. And and you know, the answer. You know, the answer basically lies in, you know, when I, when I was a veterinary student, I had had a little bit of exposure to alternative medicine.

You know, nothing nothing really major. Certainly nothing that was, officially taught in veterinary school, but enough for me to see it and understand that maybe there was something.

There was something there. And, and, you know, really, I was in I was in veterinary practice for probably about 3 or 4 years, and I had been working emergency in general practice and done, you know, done a number of things over the course of that four years.

And, you know, one of the things, one of the things I think maybe a lot of, a lot of non medically trained people, may not think about from the standpoint of how medicine is practiced, is, is a lot of medicine is practiced as an algorithm.

So in other words, if this happens then you do this as an algorithm and cut out there. Oh yeah. As an algorithm. Gotcha. Just very kind of linear scientific like left brain a yeah, it's very much a it's very much, sort of an if then statement.

So, you know, if this happens, then you run this test and based on those results, then you do this, and then you do this and you work your way. You work your way down the treatment algorithm.

So the, the, the issue comes up is what happens when you run out of room and, and you're at the end of the algorithm and your patient's not better. And that was that was kind of what I found myself actually bumping up against with my patients as I was running out of things to do.

And me sitting down with pet owners and telling them there's nothing else that we can do, take them home and call us when it's time. I hated that having having that conversation.

I still hate having that conversation.

Why Integrative Veterinary Medicine Matters

And that really led me to start think back to some of those experiences I had had years before, and it started me down the road to really explore avenues of treatment that were outside of, sort of outside of the lane of what I was taught in veterinary school.

And, and because of that, I wound up getting trained in acupuncture and then chiropractic and learned a lot about herbal therapy. And really started to integrate all of that stuff to, into practice.

And what I found was, is that when I was using both Western medicine and the alternative therapies, I'm getting much more results than I ever did with with just medicine alone.

And that, that really just sort of set me down the path of, of having kind of this personal mission of always looking for what else is out there to, to help my patients.

And, you know, I mean, the criteria for me is it has to be scientifically valid and and it has to be reasonably safe. And if I can meet those two criteria, then it's absolutely something that I will look at for my patients.

So over the years, you know, we've kind of expanded our current regimen, you know, from you know, from what we already talked about to hyperbaric oxygen, ozone therapy, plating, electromagnetic field therapy.

We do a lot of work with cannabis, which has an enormous place in in the cancer conversation. So it's just kind of an ongoing and ever expanding circle of, of of things that we can do to help our patients.

And you know what I mean? At the end of the day, you know, the art in medicine is, is, is always going to be figuring out which one of those many things or which ones of those many things are best for any given individual.

Yeah, I love that you just said, you know, the art of medicine because there is both the science and the art, just like everything in life, right? I mean, there's the science, but the science always has holes.

It has, lack of information, missing information, not enough information. You know, there's bias in science. So it's like we need the science or the foundation to kind of support our decision making.

But at the end of the day, there's an art form. Right? There is there's intuition, there's reasoning. There's look, if this isn't working, even though the science says it should, you know, don't keep doing what's not working.

Right. And that's part of the art for figuring out what actually can help. Yes. So you said you started seeing better results as you were, implementing more kind of holistic and alternative and complementary, medicines into your practice.

What what are some maybe some interesting case studies you can share with us, over the years that that you saw credible results with integrative medicine?

I mean, that's a great question. I mean, and, you know, the thing, you know, I often tell people is I talk about sort of the, the benefits of, of holistic and alternative medicine is, is, you know, Western medicine is really, really good at treating acute disease.

You break your arm, you get an infection, you get hit by a bus, whatever it may be. Western medicine is really great at that kind of stuff, where Western medicine has problems is it has problems with long term chronic care.

It's not very good, you know, long term pain control or dealing with ongoing chronic gastrointestinal issues or inflammatory problems. There's because usually with those kinds of conditions, there isn't a target.

Western medicine is it's it is like a sharpshooter. It needs a target. It's real good at hitting the target, but it has to have a target. If if the if the if the diagnosis is vague, non-existent.

Western medicine has a real hard time. And interestingly, that is exactly where natural medicine shines is with long term chronic care and kind of nonspecific things.

And the reason the reason why that is, is because is because a lot of natural medicine. Well, it certainly does have it does often have pharmaceutical properties to it.

The other thing that it does, though, is it supports a patient's body as a whole. So in other words, we're making the patient healthier in the in the more global sense.

And a lot of times what happens is, is when you make them healthier, they will start to fix their own problems. So we don't necessarily have to always have the answer to any given problem.

If we can make the body healthy enough, the body will fix it itself. That's the great thing about a biological system is a biological system always wants to be healthy, and if you give it half a chance and you give it a little nudge in the right direction, a lot of times it will do that.

So this is a very long winded way to get to answered the answer of your question. Which is the kind of things that we often see the most dramatic results with our long term chronic issues.

So patients with arthritis or, you know, chronic joint pain, chronic back pain, longstanding gastrointestinal problems like involuntary bowel disease, these sorts of things, seizure disorders, can be can be very responsive to, to natural medicine.

And, you know, and per the the topic of a cancer, you know, cancer is a disease that clearly Western medicine can in many cases cannot completely cure.

And I'm not necessarily making the claim that that alternative medicine can either. But but again, come back to the anything that we can do to make the patient's body healthier as a whole is going to allow their immune system to manage their cancer better.

So what we wind up seeing is, is we wind up seeing patients that not only live longer than they would have with Western medicine alone, but we see them living better than they would have with Western medicine alone.

And, you know, certainly in veterinary medicine, quality of life is the whole thing. You know, nobody wants their pet to live in pain and misery. You know, so we have to preserve quality of life.

Otherwise we don't really have anything. And that's really where holistic and natural and integrative medicine can come in handy, because not only is it really good at supporting their body and treating things that are wrong with them, but in many cases, and particularly in the sense of cancer care, it can also help mitigate some of the

negative effects of the Western therapy, the radiation, the chemotherapy, side effects, all that kind of stuff can often be mitigated and made much more pleasant by the addition of alternative care.

Cancer Care Case Study and Quality of Life

Yeah, I think that's one of the, you know, where the the natural therapies, holistic therapies really can shine, right, is where you're really addressing the terrain of the body.

You're addressing the entire body, you know, and oftentimes you're addressing the entire being, you know, the not just the body but also the mind, the conditions of the environment, so that there's there's greater happiness and more, you know, peace and contentment, certainly more joy, which we know contributes to healing both in people and in animals.

Right. So, yeah, I think that's where holistic medicine can, can certainly really shine. And then, as you said, conventional medicine has a lot of great tools to one diagnose, which is, you know, fantastic for diagnosing, and but then to going in and maybe, you know, with some very fine, very focused approaches. Right.

But sometimes it's so damaging at the same time, like chemotherapy, radiation, that if you're not taking care of the immune system, the lymphatic system, the, you know, all the other parts.

I mean, I'm talking about humans, but I'm I'm guessing it's all the same size, too. It's all the same. Yeah. Yeah, I'm guessing it's all the same. Right.

It is taking care of all the other parts. Then, you know, the chances of not only longevity of life, but quality of life decrease exponentially. Absolutely.

That is, that is very true. Do you have so do you have a case studying? Share with us whether a dog or a cat. Let's start me with a dog that came to you that had cancer, some form of cancer.

And through an integrative approach, you're able to help that animal go into remission. Well, I mean, so. So, yes. Although remission, is sometimes a tricky thing depending on the particular type of cancer.

But, I mean, one one case that immediately comes to mind is, a dog that came in in my office, a number of years ago was a, was a Bouvier, which is a, kind of a large shaggy dog.

And this dog, was kind of an older dog. He was, I think he was 9 or 10 at the time, and he was diagnosed with a soft tissue sarcoma on, on his lower right leg, on his hock, which is if I can angle, in a person.

And they had taken the dog to their regular veteran who had done a very good job in, and biopsy it and diagnosing it, and, you know, based on where, based on where this mass was, it wasn't something that was going to be really searched for, removable, because it was right on top of the joint.

So the veterinarian's recommendation and I don't follow them for this, because from a Western perspective, this is the appropriate recommendation. Their recommendation was amputation.

And needless to say, the owner wasn't thrilled with that plan. And she came to me about it, you know, and I had to look at it and and, you know, what we wound up doing was we put the dog on, on a pretty broad spectrum of herbal medication.

So, so, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer herbs, immune supportive herbs. We have a dog on medical cannabis. I changed the dog's diet to a much, less, inflammatory type diet.

A lot of dogs. And this is a perhaps a whole nother conversation. But there's a real issue with commercial dog food. It is incredibly pro-inflammatory.

It's it's it's a it's a disaster. But that's again, that's a conversation for another day. But but nonetheless, so from the time this dog immediately initially presented to the time that he ultimately passed away, was over four years.

And to be clear, the dog didn't die from the cancer, so we didn't make that tumor go away. But it never really got any bigger, and it never really did anything.

And it never bothered the dog. So, you know, he didn't mind that it was there. So, you know, so, I mean, I think that's a real good example of, of a dog that, that a would have lost his leg and B, if that had happened, it that absolutely would have the dog's life, because a dog of that size moving on three legs will work for a while.

But some point orthopedic speaking, they're going to fall apart. Because they just it's just too hard for them to do it. You know, so, so for both of those reasons, I, you know, I mean, I think we, you know, we bought this dog an enormous amount of, of, of quality and quantity of life and, and, you know, I mean, the owner clearly couldn't have been happier with it.

Yeah. It's, wonderful to hear. And in dog years, that would have been, what, more than 20 years at his age, maybe. There you go. Yeah. Right. I mean, it's a long time and it's a long, good dog.

Yeah. Well, and I love that you brought up. I mean, it's the same thing that, that, you know, we find in, in working with people with cancer is that, you know, you may have a tumor and the the first thought is, I need to get this out of me as quickly as possible.

But often, especially when you talk to some of the best integrative medical doctors on the planet, they say, look, that's not necessarily that should not necessarily be a first concern.

It's not the tumor can actually be saving your life or prolonging your life, right? I mean, that's one of the purposes of the tumor. The body is actually protecting you by producing as a tumor, encapsulating all these cancer cells, helping preventing it from spreading and so forth.

And most cancers actually do not have symptoms at all. Right. And so, you can go in and start destroying it and messing with it and then spread it and then cause a whole host of other issues.

Like you said, it wasn't bothering the dog cosmetically in humans. Sometimes we we say, yeah, we don't want that tumor there. You know, it's cosmetically I don't want it there.

But often if it doesn't grow any further, it's not spreading and it's not causing you any physical, actual problems. There is, you know, no reason in some cases to go in, like you said, an amputated leg or try to get rid of the tumor because you can actually improve quality of life, by not doing things sometimes than trying to rush and do something.

So, you know, the, the, the story you just shared is, is very similar, again, to what a lot of people deal with, and decisions that we have to make and say, look, if it's, if it's not only about longevity of life, but quality of life, I think those, you know, the quality always has to come first.

Sure. And, you know, one of the, one of the one of the, the two of the greatest things about about being in veterinary medicine and treating animals in general is, is number one, animals have no sense of the esthetic.

So the fact that there was a tumor on this dog's like, you know, it wasn't weighing heavily upon the dog, you know, it wasn't worried about what he looked like or what everybody else was going to say or anything to that effect.

And the second thing, which is like, which is which is clearly the greatest lesson that we can all learn from animals is they're very, very good at living in the moment.

You know, animals don't they? Don't you know, they do not formulate the thought process that goes, why me? How could this have happened to me? They just they get up in the morning and they take stock of what they have to

work with, and they go about their day.

And, and, you know, that is it's such a beautiful thing and such a lesson that we can all learn, from them. And particularly when there's, when there's something seriously wrong, I often have to remind people is, is, you know, what, your dog or your cat, they don't know that, that they have cancer.

They don't know that they have kidney disease. And and as such, they're just going to live their life as long as we can keep them feeling good.

Causes of Cancer in Pets

And it's really important for people to remember that, you know, because because animals sort of cue off their owner. If the owner is sitting there staring at the dog saying, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, then the dogs are going to get stressed out, although they don't really know why.

So so again, we all just sort of need to in those in those instances just learn how to live in the moment and and enjoy what we have when we have it. Yeah.

Such a, such a beautiful lesson. So in terms of for dogs and cats specifically, let's say, what what have you found to really be the leading causes of cancer?

And, you know, we don't just get into all of them, but what are some of the leading causes that we as pet owners, pet parents, as we say, you know, need to know about and really avoid contributing more of those causes to to our pets.

Sure. I mean, and truthfully of this question is no different than if I ask this question to a physician. But ultimately, you know, I mean, like many complex diseases, it's going to be a multiple factorial thing that's going to revolve around genetics and exposure to environmental toxins.

And nutrition. I mean, those are pretty much the three things, you know, one way or the other, that or, you know, that are going to either help you not get cancer or cause you to get cancer.

You know, obviously there's nothing we can do on the genetic sense, at least not yet. You know, until until they can sort out the whole gene therapy thing.

You know, genetics are what they are. You know, from that standpoint, however, there are things that we can do. I mean, environmental toxin wise, that's kind of middle of the road as far as what you can do.

You know, we all kind of live in a toxic soup, and we just have to, just have to live with that. You know, you're walking down the street, you're breathing in car exhaust.

It is what it is. There's not much you can do about it. But, you know, I mean, for example, if if somebody is a smoker, you know, that absolutely presents a danger to the pet.

You know, if we, if somebody, works in a place where there's where, say, there's fumes or like, they work in maybe like an auto shop where maybe there's, like, toxic stuff on the ground and whatnot.

Shop dog, you know, I mean, those dogs are getting exposed things and remember, you know, dogs or cats, they'll they'll walk over stuff. They'll walk, you know, they'll walk through things that are potentially problematic.

And then later in the day, as part of their natural grooming, they're going to lick their feet. So they're ingesting that stuff, whatever it may be. You know, same thing with like, cleaning products, you know, if you're using, if you're using like bleach and ammonia and, or kind of chemical cleaning products, your dog or your cats getting exposed to that kind of stuff, you know, because again, they're laying on the floor or they're grooming themselves after they've been laying on the floor.

So, so some environmental things you can control for and some you can't. And I think, you know, you don't want to tear your hair out over the thing. But you know, I mean, I think you you do the best that you can to to keep both yourself and your pets living as reasonably clean as you can.

The single biggest thing that have 100% control over is what they eat. And, and it is very, very well known that certain foods, certain chemical compounds found in foods, certain ingredients are going to be more pro-inflammatory and certain certain compounds are going to be anti-inflammatory.

And one of the things that we know, and I'm you are very well aware about cancer is ultimately cancer is about inflammation. You know, I mean, most cancers have a component of inflammation to them.

And it could be argued that any or most cancers originate from chronic inflammation. You know, I don't think that that's a particularly revolutionary statement to make.

But it's it is something that people need to think about. And, you know, the, you know, so the thing about food, you know, the way I kind of describe feeding, feeding pets or people bad food, it's kind of like people who smoke cigarets, like intuitively speaking, they know that over the long term, smoking cigarets is probably going to kill them, but that doesn't actually stop them from smoking that cigaret right now.

And you know, to, to kind of translate that to food, you know, we all know that the more fresh whole food we eat, the better off we are. But it doesn't necessarily stop us from eating that crappy fast food meal right now.

Because people aren't very good at sort of thinking in the long term in that way. But here's the thing about pets is commercially prepared pet food, like kibble.

And food is basically like feeding is like feeding a person highly processed food every day, twice a day for their entire life. I don't think you have to have a PhD in nutrition to know that.

That's probably a bad idea for somebody to be eating fast twice a day, forever. You know, we we all know that to be true. We just think about pet food in that way, because the pet food companies are very good at packing things and advertising things in such a way that they make you think that it's incredibly healthy, but it's not.

You know, the research is very clear that, you know, that that dry food and canned food contains chemical compounds that are known to cause inflammation and cancer, that, that these, that these foods don't have all of the micronutrients in, in them that they did before they went through that processing.

And, and also when we look at dry foods, dry foods contain enormous amounts of carbohydrates, often 60 or even up to 60% carbohydrates. Carbohydrates in excess are pro-inflammatory.

All of this stuff ultimately get you further down the road, to a cancer diagnosis. So, you know, like I say, I mean, it it's not necessarily the conversation everybody wants to have or they want to be sure.

But in the grand scheme of like, how do I prevent my pet from getting cancer? It's the one thing that you have complete control over. It's huge. And, you know, the fact that you just, made that correlation between, you know, just our regular dry pet food, cats and dogs, right?

The kibble or whatever it is, even the so-called healthy kind, it's like feeding, you know, fast food twice a day. You know, anybody who's ever seen what was that documentary years ago?

The guy who ate McDonald's every day and rescued me, I think fast fat. What was it? Fast food nation, fast food nation or something? Yeah, I basically just say I think it was also Supersize Me.

Supersize Me. That was the one. I remember watching that like a good, I don't know, 12, 15 years ago. Maybe it goes back a bit, you know. Yeah. And just watching somebody eating fast food every day, you know, within 30 days, you know, they're like almost dead.

You can just imagine why, dogs and cats. I mean, the cancer rates are astronomical. The autoimmune disease rates are astronomical. The liver disease rates are astronomical.

I mean, all these diseases that really same with humans, dogs and cats should almost never have if they were eating, you know, a normal, healthy diet, right?

For the most part, you know, it's very true. And, and, you know, I mean, you what you just brought up reminded me of one other thing that that probably I should bring up in the hope of, you know, if if we had to categorize it somewhere, we'll categorize it as an environmental toxin.

But, dogs and cats are chronically overmedicated. They're over vaccinated and they're overmedicated. You mean a lot of pets are getting vaccinated, you know, every year for their entire life, oftentimes for diseases that they will never come in contact with.

We all know that vaccines are not completely benign substances. They cause inflammation by design. That's how they work. And to be clear, I am very pro-vaccine.

I am pro appropriate vaccination. I'm just anti over vaccination. So I, I mean to my telling people not to vaccinate their pets that that would be terrible advice.

But once your pet is appropriately vaccinated then you just. Oh, I lost you there for a minute. Yeah. It, it says your internet keeps going in and out.

It's been cutting out a little bit here and there. It's been mostly okay, but they're just lost you for a good 30s. All right, I'm making an adjustment.

Hopefully this will work. Where did, where did you lose me? You said I'm. I am not anti-vaccine. I'm pro-vaccine, but but pro appropriate vaccine. Gotcha. Right out.

Okay. Yeah. So, I mean, pro appropriate vaccines. I mean, year. Let me pause for a second. Let me make an edit note here for our team. See edit 30 minutes.

And when, screen cuts. Yeah. The, the, if it gets much worse, we might have to revisit. So far it's been I mean, it kind of like cuts here and there. I can still hear everything you're saying.

But that was okay. It really cut out. So I think if it happens, I'll stop you and let you know. All right. Sounds good. All right. So, you know, I mean, from a vaccination standpoint, you you want to vaccinate your pets for the diseases that they might get exposed to, that could that, that that could be harmful or lethal.

But once they're properly vaccinated, you just want to have, you know, take a real good, hard look at what do they need to be vaccinated for in the future.

Now, you know, I mean, vaccines, we all know that vaccines are not completely benign sources. You know, they vaccines by design cause inflammation. It's how they work.

So, so, you know, so whether it's vaccines or it's like, you know, petting heartworm preventative and flea and tick medication every month for entire life.

Now, admittedly, depending on where you live, something like heartworm medication may be necessary. But for example, here, where I live in the San Francisco Bay area, it's not always necessary and it's not required to these pets on.

So it just depends. You just again, you know, medicine is medicine needs to be visualized. And that depends on your pet.

Vaccines, Medications, and Environmental Toxins

And that depends on where you live and what they're going to get exposed to and all that sort of stuff. There is no such thing as, like, cookie cutter medicine.

And, you know, one of the things that makes me a little crazy, are like these, like these vaccine clinics that pop up, you know, basically the way these places are making their money is they're just they're given vaccines.

So it will come as no surprise to anybody that they're going to recommend vaccinating. And it's just in so many cases, it's not necessary. And you wind up seeing, you know, there, you know, there is an incidence of vaccine associated rumors and cats, autoimmune disease has, you know, has, you know, has been linked somewhat to, to vaccination.

So, again, just in the sense of trying to limit exposure to things that they, you know, that you have control over, and certainly food and medicine are things you really have control over.

So speaking in terms of food, you know, what? What does a good diet look like for a dog and for a cat? So, you know, in, in its most basic sense, you know, everybody, whether it's us or a dog or a cat or whomever, all of our bodies are designed to to optimally thrive on a nutrient profile that our species evolved.

Eating. So, so, you know, the germ of nutrients that's ideal for us as a human is clearly not going to be the same for a dog or for a cat, and, you know, and a dog and a cat's nutrient profiles are very different.

Cats are very much obligate carnivores. You know, they're going to survive largely on protein and fat. Whereas a dog and, you know, I just want to make the distinction that, evolutionarily speaking, a dog is not a wolf.

And they do not the same, nutritional requirements. Dogs have a much broader ability to, to utilize carbohydrates in their diet than, say, a wolf would.

That doesn't necessarily mean they should be eating kibble that has 70% carbohydrates. But can I have a little carbs in their diet and be okay? Yeah, absolutely they can.

But at the end of the day, you know, when we're looking at like an evolutionarily appropriate diet, the one thing that you can always say is fresh, whole food diets are what it needs to be.

Nobody evolved eating food out of a bag or a can. You know, we all evolved to eat fresh foods. So that means you, you know, whether it's fresh meat, fresh vegetables, fresh whole grains, whatever it may be.

You know, when it's just a question of of creating that in a nutrient profile that's ideal for that, that species as well as that individual animal. So you can go out and buy commercially made, fresh, whole food diets for pets, be they frozen cooked food, frozen raw food, heat dried raw food, all of those are great.

There's a lot of really great companies these days that produce that kind of food. And also, you know, if people are so inclined to do so, you can make food at home for your pet as well.

That way you have complete control as far as what goes in it. The only caveat as far as making food at home is that you have to work off of a properly balanced recipe.

You can't just throw a bunch of meat and vegetables in a bowl and call it good. It's just a recipe for a nutrient deficiency. But, but if you're working off of a recipe, it's a great way, to feed your dog or cat an optimal diet.

And again, you know, when all is said and done, you know, good nutrition is absolutely the single best piece of preventative medicine that exists. And dogs in general, I mean, they're also carnivore, right?

I mean, but generally speaking. And so they really need a higher protein, higher fat diet and ideally from, from what

I understand from raw meat as well.

Is that true? Well, you know, one can make the argument whether or not dogs are truly carnivores or they're a very much carnivorous, leaning omnivore.

That's one of those discussions that veterinarians get into over drinks. But but but but that not that notwithstanding. They definitely they definitely do like their animal protein for sure.

You know, it does not, by definition, have to be raw. I'm a big fan of raw feeding, I think. Raw foods. Great. There are dogs that do better on lightly cooked food versus raw food.

And, you know, I mean, it's fine. It's again, it's very individualized. But you know, dogs will dogs can can do okay and do very well, on foods that are almost completely meat based, versus foods that are mostly meat, you know, maybe and this is just ballpark, maybe like two thirds meat, like one third like vegetables and whole grains.

They can do well either way. You know, remember, does dogs evolved alongside humans. So, I mean, that's, that's that's how wolves became dogs is over a period of about 30,000 years living with people.

They evolved into dogs and and and the one of the things that happened was, is they evolved learning to eat the things that the people around them were eating and thus throwing to them, so that that led them to become more adapted to eat non-meat type things.

You know, so, so dogs have a bit more variability in what could be an optimal day than, say, a cat. You know, a, you know, one could argue that cats or even today, cats aren't actually domesticated.

But, you know, I think often than not they just tolerate us. But, I, you know, I, I could I could definitely agree with that, right. Yeah. You know, I mean, I very like read souls very, you know, they're like, no, you're, you're my, where they're pets and, you know, it's true.

I you know what? Like, like if if Armageddon happened and every person on the planet disappeared, most cats would be fine. Cats would be totally fine. Most cats would be fine.

I, I, I do frequently remind my dogs that they would last about seven seconds in the one they are they incapable of anything. I think my I think my dogs would do okay because, I've never stopped them from like their, their nature of hunting.

Nutrition for Dogs and Cats

And so when we go out running in the mountains, they often catch something. They'll catch a rabbit and they'll eat the whole rabbit, or they'll catch, you know, they don't catch birds, but, they try to catch birds.

They realize they can't catch birds, but rabbits, mice, things like that, you know, dead stuff that they find that's been rotting for two or 3 or 4 weeks.

And a lot of people stopped their animals. I never stopped them because I knew that was their nature. I don't know if they'd survive, but. But one thing that comes to mind is, you know, if you don't stop there, nature, you can see what their natural food source is and that's they're not out there, you know, eating plants wildly.

Maybe they might at some point. Right. But they're they're looking for dead carcasses. They're looking for animals. They can they can hunt and kill and eat all of the animal.

I mean, they eat everything, right? Man? They my dogs catch a rabbit. They eat everything. The fur, the stomach, the. And they love it, you know? So I'm like, okay, this must be good for them.

They do. And, you know, I mean, I think I think and this is a good topic for this conversation that, that, you know,

another thing that we know that that has enormous control over our health and our and our inflammation levels is our gut health, is our microbiome.

And and, you know, I mean, when dogs when, when dogs, like, your dogs are out there like eating all kinds of gross stuff off the forest floor and all that kind of stuff, they're feeding their biome.

Yeah, is what they're doing. And, you know, normally, you know, we, you know, we're going to put their sterile food in a bowl. And, and, you know, it may very well be that that's not the greatest in the world from the standpoint of their, of their immune support.

You know, we know we know full well that that small stressors on the body actually make us stronger. And, and, you know, so when, when, you know, when they eat stuff that causes some issues in their system, oftentimes the immune system comes out stronger on the other side.

I mean, it's kind of like it's kind of like us exercising. Like every time you exercise, you're actually damaging your muscles. Yeah. But in the long term it makes you stronger.

So that kind of hermetic stress is, is really, really good for them and for us. Yeah. I think you shouldn't necessarily be eating dead rabbits off the floor.

Yeah, well, I don't do that on my account. Our bodies are totally different than in a dog's body. Our intestines, it's true. Our saliva, our bacteria, our enzymes, everything is different, right?

So you can't. True. You can't really say we should be eating exactly what dogs are eating anyway. No. You know, I mean, you know, the average, you know, your average dog on the street would probably eat things that would put me in the hospital.

Right. Exactly. So, moving on a little bit in terms of obviously diet is huge. Cleaning up the toxins around the home, the toxins. I mean, you brought a good point.

You know, our our, pets are closer to the ground than we are. So if you have carpets that are releasing toxic VOCs, right, they're breathing that in. If they're if you're spraying floors with chemicals, they're instantly breathing it in on their paws or even licking it into their bodies, you know, clothing with all these perfumes and things that they're blankets, all kinds of things.

So getting all the toxins, you know, that's true for ourselves. It's not only good for us, but good for our pets. Getting all the toxins, cleaning up the food, you know, much more fresh food, higher protein, more raw, if possible.

Right. But in addition to that, what are some of the more kind of interesting? You mentioned cannabis a little bit, interesting and effective integrative treatments, that you've seen great success with when working with animals?

That's a that's a great question. And there's there's a lot of stuff out there. And, you know, I often, I often tell people that, you know, I mean, it's not it's not all that uncommon that somebody comes into my office because their pet has cancer and they have already sat down and googled something like natural therapies for cancer.

And you get like 200 million things that come up. And you know what I mean? The reality is, is even if you could, even if you could strip away all of this sort of just internet garbage and those 200 million results, you would still come up with a very, very long list of of natural compounds that have proven anti-cancer properties to them.

And, and the reality is, is that you can't give all of them. You can't even in many cases give most of them. And, you know, I mean, the thing is, is like, if you were I as a person, if you made the decision, you know, I'm going to take 40 supplements a day.

You can do that. That is, generally speaking, a nonstarter with a dog or a cat. So we really have to figure out strategies to, you know, to find ways that we can get the most compounds in the most effective compounds into

these animals.

So oftentimes the place that I will start is I will start with a really robust, well constructed combination supplement. And the reason why I do that is because if, if we can give them a really good combination supplement that has, say like 30 or 40 different ingredients in it, then then what's happening is all of a sudden you really can give those 30 or 30 supplements in a day.

But as a practical matter, you're only giving one. So for example, one of the supplements that I use a lot, I'll just some of the particular ingredients because I think they're, they're great antique answered immune supportive ingredients.

Transfer a factor. There is, a very long list of medicinal mushrooms. We could talk for days about the anti-cancer and immune supportive benefits of mushrooms.

In fact, I have an entire hour long lecture that I give to veterinarians about anti-cancer effects of mushrooms. So, you know, and there's some really interesting studies out there.

One of them, even veterinary specific, to show significant anti-cancer effects, of mushrooms. So transfer factor mushrooms, anti-inflammatory herbs like Buswell, curcumin, antioxidants like superoxide dismutase, immune modulators like ip6, you know, these kinds of, these kinds of compounds, high doses of omega fatty acids, fish oil, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer, Chinese herbal therapy, has some very, very interesting and attractive anti-cancer properties, although which specific herbal combination is right is very specific to the individual patient.

So that that would require somebody who has some knowledge of Chinese medicine and Chinese medical diagnosis. And then, you know, kind of getting back to the cannabis conversation, there's a lot, a lot of evidence out there to show anti-cancer benefits of cannabis.

And when I say cannabis, I'm talking about both CBD and THC and various other cannabinoids. And, and that is absolutely something that can be used in, in veterinary patients as well.

So, so to be clear and I think there's a lot of sort of misunderstanding and misconceptions as it pertains to THC and animals. So animals absolutely are susceptible to the psychoactive effects of THC.

And in fact, since we don't have to get into dogs are actually more susceptible, than than any other animal, they just have more receptors in their brain.

That said, just like an A person, you absolutely can give THC to a dog or a cat and have them not have psychoactive effects. It's purely just a function of dose.

You know, if the average adult human eight five milligrams of THC, they would feel nothing. You know, so the same thing is possible with animals, as you know, you just they just need to be dosed appropriately.

And even though, say, for example, that dose of THC is not having a psychoactive effect, by no means does that suggest that it's not having effect. You know, it's just it's not having a toxic effect.

Supplements and Integrative Therapies

So, you know, I often talk to people about putting pets that have cancer on broad spectrum cannabis products that have both THC and CBD and other cannabinoids and other terpenes in it.

You know, those products just have to be dosed very, very carefully. And I would I would caution anybody, not to do this kind of thing with some sort of veterinary guidance.

You absolutely can put your dog or your cat on a CBD product, like a hemp based CBD product. Those are incredibly safe. You know, by all means. You know, as long as you're getting a good quality product, use it.

But the second you cross that line into things that have THC in them, that's when you need a little medical guidance to to make sure that you don't get into trouble.

So in terms of your, your kind of favorite combination supplement, obviously, you know, I don't want people to misunderstand this. You know, even a supplement that's got 40 really good ingredients in it.

It's not a cure, all right? It's not. Okay. Take the supplement and then don't worry about anything else you still need to do everything else as well, right?

I mean, the animal. Absolutely. Yeah. Actually they need exercise. They, you know, need love, they need clean environment. They need good food. The supplement is that's what's meant to supplement.

Right. It's and that's exactly right. And and again just to stress this is not a conversation about do this instead of Western medicine. Yeah. You know I mean if it's possible to remove a tumor surgically then that's probably a good thing to do in most cases.

Get it out of there. If, if, if your pet has a condition that that chemo therapy or radiation would carry with it a good prognosis, that is absolutely something that that you need to consider doing.

I, you know, I have found over years that the pets that do the best are the ones that are getting both Western and alternative medicine. That's not to say that I don't sometimes treat pets where people say, I don't want any of that.

I just want to go the natural route, and we can certainly do that. But again, if you're looking for, you know, sort of the longest runway, if you will, then then, you know, you take advantage of, of all of the benefits that both Western and alternative medicine have to offer and kind of put them all together.

Beautiful. And so what is this supplement you're talking about? Is this something that people can just buy? What's it called? Where where can they get it?

Well, there's a couple of them that I would look at. There's one supplement, that I make. It's called Neutra thrive. And they can get that at Ultimate Pet nutrition.com.

There's a dog and a cat one. And there there is also a product, out there, and I don't have the website, right in front of me, but they are called veterinary immune tests.

It's made by a company. Immune tabs, Habs and, the the company that makes them is called Rainmakers Pet Nutrition. They do have a website, although I don't have it right in front of me.

But I'm sure you can find it and post it. That is also a very, very good combination supplement. For, for pets with cancer, immune disease, that sort of thing.

You know, so, so those, you know, those are the kinds of things that I frequently look to, as, as what I would describe as like a foundational supplement and then build from there, whether it's fish oil, Chinese herbs, cannabis, Western herbs, whatever it may be.

You know, you start with that one base thing. And usually what I do because, you know, especially if we're going to talk about cats, you know, it's always questionable how much you're going to be able to get into the animal.

So I'll start with the one based supplement. And once we get that sorted out and they're taking that, then I'll add in one more thing and add in one more thing and add in one more thing.

You know, just one thing at a time. You know, if if I send somebody home and say, give these five supplements, more often than not, I'm going to get a call that that the that the dog or the cat won't eat them.

So, you know, it's always a question of very, very slow and gradual introductions of these sorts of things to pets

because, you know, they don't clearly they don't intuitively know that, that it's good for them.

You know, I mean, you know, when I take my supplements, you know, I know that they're good for me, and I choke those pills down even though I don't really want to.

But, but, you know, you can take your dog to do that, so we have to find a way to, to make it so, you know, they're willing to participate. Yeah, it's a good point.

You know, and there's lots of lots of ways to do that, right? Like when I use, a hydrated, you know, green food, mixed berries and fruits and greens and stuff.

It's dehydrated. So, you know, I, I do that with some raw meat and then I'll put their powder supplements in it and mix it all together. They don't even know the supplements are there. Right.

All it takes is the is the meat and the right and the, you know, because it's water and it's mixed together. It's almost like a soup. Right? So. Right, right, right.

Different ways that you have any other tips for cats or dogs and helping them get their supplements down? Yeah. You know, I mean, cats are invariably going to be trickier than dogs.

Yeah. But you know, I mean, I think, well, when it comes to dogs, I mean, sometimes you can, you can bamboozle a dog. They're just easier. So, you know, if there's something really easy, like, you know, you can mix it in, you can mix it in with that.

If it's, if it happens to be like a pill or something. I often find that a little, a little wad of cream cheese works really well. Works better than peanut butter, because peanut butter tends to stick where cream cheese just kind of slides down.

So, so that can be beneficial. You know, I, I saw a video the other day of a veterinarian, using, raspberries, you know, there's like that, like, raspberries are hot.

He was putting pills in raspberries and feeding them to the dog. There you go. Which I thought was a great idea if your dog happens to like raspberries.

I thought that was super clever. Now, when it comes to cats, it's clearly a much more, a much trickier thing. And, you know, the the. I think the trick with cats is anything that you're going to introduce to you really, really gradually.

So for example, if you're going to put like a powdered supplement in their food, start by adding just the tiniest little pinch and mixing it in. And then each day add a tiny little bit more.

Because the thing about cats is, you know, cats are like OCD people. They don't like anything to change. Everything has to be the same all the time. Otherwise things are bad.

So if you do it super gradually, less of a shock and less upsetting to them. And the reality is, and this is this is especially true when it comes to, to supplements, not always true with pharmaceuticals, but with supplements, you know, like, for example, with that cat, if you can work that cat up to say like half the dose of supplement and any more than that, they're like, no thanks, I'm not going to eat.

And you know what? Feed them half the dose. It's still going to be awful. Like I say, that doesn't always work with pharmaceuticals.

Consultations and Closing Remarks

Sometimes you have to give the whole dose, but but with supplements, you know, you can get away with a less than the quote unquote full dose and still get benefit out of it.

Yeah, that's a good point. Speaking of cats don't like things to change. This morning was usually I wake up at like 630 in the morning, just automatic go use the restroom, whatever, and go back to sleep until about seven.

Just just to have it right. And that's your thing. And usually my cat's, you know, she's ready to go outside by then, so she's meow. And and, you know, we let her outside in the morning.

Usually I do, or my wife does if she gets up. And this morning I remember looking up and just seeing the cat sitting there, right. The stairs, just the shadow staring at me.

Her name is Chloe. She's just sitting there staring at me like, okay, I'm ready to let me outside. And I wasn't ready to get up yet. I went back to sleep, and, it just reminded me of what you said.

She's so used to, like, this is what we do. I'm ready, you know, don't change it on me. And then she was just going to sit there and stare daggers at you until you do it.

They're daggers and meow daggers. I mean, she's that really, really intimidating meow. And she. And she wants to, you know. So anyway. Yeah. Well thank you.

I mean, I appreciate your time or your good wisdom tips, information. Obviously we can have many, many conversations. There's a lot more, you know, that we could cover.

I know you got a lot of great resources on your website. Can people consult with you? One on one as well. Did you do Zoom or Skype or anything like that? Or.

They need to come into your clinic. It's there if they can. Yeah. You know, unfortunately, the way the veterinary medicine laws are written, I can't really give medical advice for a patient that I haven't physically examined.

So, so generally when we do, we do need to see them at least once, after which, at least for a year, I can I can do, like, telemedicine related stuff.

Cool. So yeah. Holistic vet Caricom. Also ultimate pet nutrition.com. Again, Gary, thank you so much for your time and sharing all this great information resources.

Really appreciate it. You're very welcome. It's been my pleasure. And I want to thank everyone for tuning in to the Conquering Cancer Summit. Please share this with friends and family.

Together, we truly can make a difference for the future of humanity in ending the cancer pandemic. Thank you and I wish you ultimate health and happiness.

Be well.