

Garlic: The Facts

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When it comes to your pet's health, do you want to follow facts or fears? Unfortunately, garlic has come under attack. This is primarily as a result of garlic's close cousin onion's reputation for triggering hemolytic or "Heinz factor" anemia (where circulating red blood cells burst) through its high concentration of thiosulphate. With onions, a single generous serving can cause this reaction.

Garlic simply DOES NOT CONTAIN THE SAME CONCENTRATION of this compound! In fact, it is barely traceable and readily excreted (not stored in the body).

Despite this fact, garlic is falling victim to mass hysteria spread through the internet. Yes, there are 51,174 sites devoted to warning about the "toxicity" of garlic, this hysteria has even prompted the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center to place a warning on garlic although there is little scientific data to back this claim other than the fact that thiosulphate is also found in garlic. Yet, there are also over 400,000 sites still proclaiming its benefits, many of them from reputable holistic veterinarians who have widely used garlic in their practice for many years! How can an herb suddenly turn so bad?!

There is no doubt that onion, due to its concentration of thiosulphate, will cause Heinz factor anemia. In addition, as stated by Wendy Wallner, D.V.M., "Onions are only one of the substances which can cause Heinz body anemia. Other substances such as Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and benzocaine-containing topical preparations can also cause Heinz body anemia in the dog." The latter probably accounts for many cases as it is prevalent in creams often recommended for allergy-suffering pets due to its ability to numb the itch. It is absorbed through the skin and builds up in the blood stream. This other substance is likely to have been involved in cases where garlic was suspect.

For centuries, as long as humans have been using herbs, garlic has been a primary remedy turned to in a majority of cases. For as long as people have been using garlic, they have also been feeding it to their animal companions. Its properties have proven far reaching, easy on the body and safe to use. In the past fifty years, during the rebirth of holistic medicine in the United States, garlic has been in the forefront. Every text that I have researched on herbal health which mentions pet care has recommended it, especially for its incredible anti-parasitic and anti-septic properties.

In my own experience, garlic has also benefited pets with cancer, diabetes, liver, heart and kidney disease, uncontrollable staph infections and a host of other conditions, as well as been a staple in my recommended preventative protocols. It has been widely used by hundreds of thousands of pet owners with no reported negative side-effects -- except its effect on their animal's breath -- until now.

This is the point; garlic has suddenly become a "suspect," not proven the culprit. Do not let mass hysteria determine a holistic care program for your dog or cat. Follow hundreds of years of "proven use" rather than recent "suspicions" in regards to this miracle herb, as garlic is known to be. As with anything, do use garlic in reasonable doses, and do know that you can trust history over hysteria.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Newman holds a Doctor of Naturopathy and a Doctor of Philosophy (in Holistic Nutrition) and has been a world renowned pioneer in the field of natural pet care. The author of nine books, including her latest, *'Three Simple Steps to Healthy Pets: The Holistic Animal Care LifeStyle[®]'*, Dr. Newman is also the formulator of Azmira Holistic Animal Care[®] products and diets.



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