



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR DOG'S RECOVERY FROM SURGERY, INJURY & ILLNESS

**Because optimal healing depends on the right
internal support**



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A well-informed pet owner
is the best advocate for
their pet's health.

— DR. MICHAEL FOX

Acute care for dogs — such as during recovery from surgery, injury or acute illness — should focus on creating the right internal environment for healing. This includes supporting gut integrity, managing inflammation, replenishing nutrients, and promoting effective tissue repair.

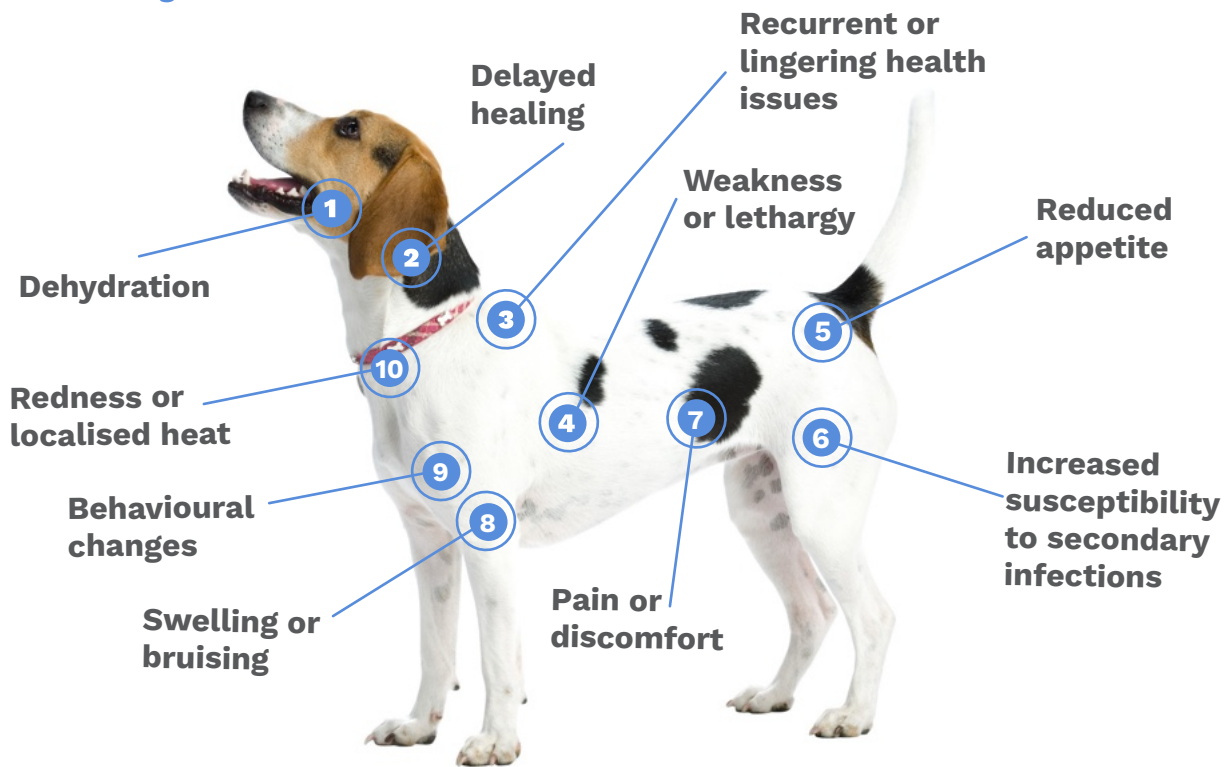
Periods of acute stress place significant strain on the body. Anaesthesia, pain, reduced mobility, appetite changes, medications, and emotional stress can all disrupt normal physiology. One of the most affected systems is the gastrointestinal tract, which plays a central role not only in digestion, but also in immune regulation, inflammation control, and nutrient absorption — all of which are critical for recovery.

During these vulnerable periods, dogs commonly experience altered gut motility, microbiome disruption, increased intestinal permeability, and elevated stress hormones. When antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, or corticosteroids are involved, these effects can be amplified. The downstream consequences may include delayed wound healing, prolonged inflammation, gastrointestinal upset, reduced resilience to secondary infections, and a slower overall recovery.

This guide focuses on supporting the whole recovery process. While immune system support remains important, we also address other key pillars of acute care — including gut repair, inflammatory balance, connective tissue healing, and nutritional support for repair and regeneration.

By using targeted, evidence-informed strategies during periods of injury, surgery, or acute illness, you can help your dog recover more comfortably, reduce complications, and return to normal function as efficiently and safely as possible.

Common signs your dog may be struggling during recovery



- 1 Dehydration:** vomiting, diarrhoea, reduced drinking, or poor appetite can all contribute to dehydration.
- 2 Delayed healing:** wounds, surgical incisions or soft tissue injuries may take longer than expected to heal.
- 3 Recurrent or lingering health issues:** in dogs with poor immune health, symptoms may improve and then return, or new issues may emerge during the recovery phase.
- 4 Weakness or lethargy:** your dog may appear unusually tired, lack energy, or struggle to return to normal activity levels.
- 5 Reduced appetite:** pain, nausea, medication use or gut disruption can lead to poor appetite during recovery.
- 6 Increased susceptibility to secondary infections:** Dogs with poor immune health may be more prone to infections, such as skin or respiratory infections, particularly if the body is under prolonged stress.
- 7 Pain or discomfort:** signs may include restlessness, vocalisation, reluctance to move, guarding behaviour or changes in posture.
- 8 Swelling or bruising:** swelling or bruising around a surgical site or injured area is common initially but should progressively improve.
- 9 Behavioural changes:** irritability, anxiety, withdrawal or changes in temperament may occur due to pain, stress or inflammation.
- 10 Redness or localised heat:** redness, warmth or tenderness around a wound or injury site may indicate inflammation or delayed tissue recovery.

Factors that can influence your dog's recovery

Recovery from surgery, injury or acute illness is influenced by far more than the immune system alone. Healing depends on how well the body can manage inflammation, repair tissues, maintain gut integrity, and cope with physical and emotional stress. The following factors can significantly affect how quickly and comfortably your dog recovers:

Nutrition: A nutritionally balanced, biologically appropriate diet provides the building blocks required for tissue repair, immune regulation, and energy production. Inadequate protein, essential fatty acids, micronutrients or calories can delay wound healing and prolong recovery.

Hydration: Adequate hydration is essential for circulation, nutrient delivery, detoxification, and tissue repair. Dehydration — whether due to reduced intake, vomiting, diarrhoea or illness — can significantly slow healing and weaken the immune system.

Stress: Physical and emotional stress elevates cortisol, which can impair wound healing, disrupt gut function, and increase inflammatory load. Minimising stress and providing a calm, predictable environment is a key but often overlooked component of recovery.

Activity and movement: Appropriate movement supports circulation, lymphatic flow and joint health during recovery. However, both excessive activity and prolonged immobility can delay healing, increase inflammation, or compromise surgical outcomes. Activity should always be guided by veterinary advice.

Age: Puppies and senior dogs often have reduced physiological reserves and may take longer to recover from surgery, illness or injury. Older dogs, in particular, may also have reduced collagen turnover and slower tissue repair.

Underlying health conditions: Dogs with chronic or systemic conditions such as kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, gastrointestinal disease or autoimmune disorders often require additional recovery support and longer healing timeframes.

Medications: Certain medications, including antibiotics, corticosteroids and immunosuppressive drugs, can disrupt the gut microbiome, impair nutrient absorption, increase muscle breakdown or slow tissue repair, particularly when used for extended periods.

Environmental factors: Exposure to environmental stressors such as toxins, allergens, pathogens, excessive noise or unstable routines can increase inflammatory burden and slow recovery.

Genetic factors: Some dogs may have genetic predispositions that affect connective tissue integrity, inflammatory responses, or healing speed, influencing recovery outcomes.

Wound and postoperative care: Appropriate wound management — including cleaning, monitoring and preventing licking or contamination — is essential for reducing infection risk and supporting optimal healing. Adhering to veterinary postoperative instructions around medications, activity restriction and follow-up care plays a critical role in recovery success.

The good news is that many of these factors can be positively influenced. There is growing scientific evidence to support the use of targeted nutritional and supplemental strategies to assist healing, reduce complications, and support recovery during periods of acute stress.

Let's start by looking at the fundamental ways you can support your dog's recovery — starting today.





Support following surgery, injury or acute illness starts here

Acute recovery places unique demands on the body. Pain, inflammation, tissue damage, stress, medications and disrupted digestion can all interfere with healing if they are not addressed appropriately. Focusing solely on symptom management often overlooks the underlying physiological processes required for effective recovery.

To best support your canine companion, we have designed a 3-step recovery support framework that targets the key drivers of delayed healing and complications.



Pet owners should always seek the guidance of their veterinarian as the first step when their pet displays any concerning symptoms. Only a qualified veterinarian can provide a formal diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatment options tailored to the specific needs of your pet.



Effective recovery begins with appropriate pain management. Pain and excessive inflammation place significant strain on the body, increase stress hormones, disrupt appetite and sleep, dampen immune responses, and can slow tissue repair if left unaddressed. The goal during acute recovery is not to suppress inflammation entirely, but to help regulate it — reducing unnecessary discomfort while allowing normal healing processes to proceed.

Palmitoylethanolamide (P.E.A)

P.E.A can be a valuable adjunct for reducing discomfort and inflammation following surgery, injury or acute illness, as it helps modulate pain and inflammatory pathways without suppressing normal healing processes.

P.E.A is an endogenous fatty acid amide that acts primarily via activation of peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor-alpha (PPAR- α) and by down-regulating mast cell activation. This reduces the release of pro-inflammatory mediators involved in pain, swelling and tissue irritation. These mechanisms are particularly relevant during acute recovery, when excessive or poorly regulated inflammation can delay tissue repair and prolong discomfort.

Evidence from both human and veterinary research demonstrates that P.E.A can reduce inflammatory and neuropathic pain, support nerve recovery, and improve comfort in conditions associated with tissue injury and immune activation. Importantly, P.E.A has an excellent safety profile and is well tolerated alongside conventional medications, including NSAIDs and corticosteroids.

While direct studies evaluating P.E.A specifically in post-surgical dogs are limited, its demonstrated benefits in canine osteoarthritis and other inflammatory conditions support its use as a gentle, non-sedating option to help manage inflammation and discomfort during recovery from surgery or acute illness.



Omega-3 Support

Marine-derived omega-3 fatty acids can play an important role in reducing discomfort and inflammation following surgery or acute illness by actively shifting the body's inflammatory response toward resolution rather than suppression.

Key omega-3 compounds such as eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), and eicosatetraenoic acid (ETA) are incorporated into cell membranes, where they compete with arachidonic acid. This results in reduced production of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins and leukotrienes, alongside increased generation of specialised pro-resolving mediators such as resolvins and protectins. This biochemical shift helps limit excessive post-operative inflammation, reduce tissue swelling, and support more comfortable recovery without impairing normal healing processes.

In dogs, omega-3 supplementation has been shown to reduce inflammatory pain, improve mobility and support inflammatory balance in both acute and chronic conditions. These effects make omega-3s particularly relevant during post-surgical recovery and periods of systemic inflammation, where excessive or prolonged inflammation can delay healing.

Importantly, omega-3 fatty acids exert their effects without the gastrointestinal irritation commonly associated with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), making high-quality marine omega-3s a well-tolerated and supportive option during periods of acute physiological stress.





Once discomfort is appropriately managed, the next priority during acute recovery is to actively support tissue repair and restoration of normal function. Surgery, injury and illness increase the body's demand for structural proteins, amino acids, minerals and energy - particularly when mobility is reduced and appetite or digestion may be compromised. Providing targeted nutritional support during this phase helps supply the building blocks required for connective tissue repair, muscle preservation, gut recovery and overall resilience, supporting a more complete and efficient return to health.

Fortigel® Collagen Peptides

Fortigel® collagen peptides can play a meaningful role in supporting healing and functional recovery following surgery, injury or acute illness by directly supporting connective tissue repair, joint integrity and musculoskeletal resilience.

Collagen makes up approximately 70% of cartilage mass. During periods of surgical stress, inflammation, reduced mobility or systemic illness, collagen breakdown increases while new collagen synthesis is often impaired. Research shows that orally administered Fortigel® is absorbed as specific bioactive collagen peptides, which preferentially accumulate in cartilage tissue and stimulate chondrocytes to increase the production of collagen and other extracellular matrix components essential for tissue repair.

In a controlled veterinary study involving dogs with osteoarthritis, daily supplementation with Fortigel® for 16 weeks resulted in significant improvements in agility, reductions in joint tenderness and pain, decreased sensitivity of affected joints and the spinal cord, improved quality of life scores, and measurable increases in thigh musculature - indicating improved functional recovery and reduced muscle wasting. Benefits were also observed as reduced discomfort after prolonged activity and less pain when standing, lying down or jumping. While this study focused on chronic joint disease, these outcomes are highly relevant to recovery periods in which joints, soft tissues and supporting musculature are vulnerable to deconditioning.

Collectively, these findings support the use of Fortigel® collagen peptides as a targeted, evidence-based nutritional intervention to assist structural healing, support mobility, and promote functional restoration in dogs recovering from surgery, injury or acute inflammatory illness.



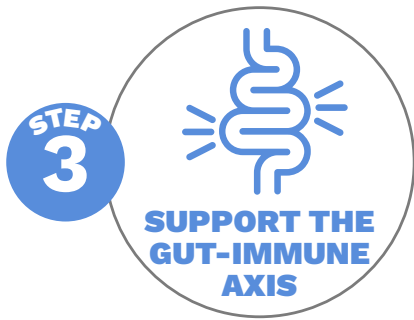
Beef Bone Broth

Following surgery, injury or acute illness, nutrients naturally present in traditionally prepared bone broth can play a valuable supportive role in recovery by assisting tissue repair, restoring gut integrity, and supporting hydration and electrolyte balance.

Amino acids such as glycine, proline and glutamine provide essential building blocks for collagen synthesis and connective tissue repair, supporting wound healing and recovery of skin, joints and soft tissues after physiological stress. Glutamine, in particular, serves as a primary fuel source for intestinal epithelial cells, helping to restore gut barrier function and reduce intestinal permeability that commonly follows illness, anaesthesia or medication use.

Gelatin and collagen-derived peptides contribute to structural tissue support while also helping to stimulate appetite and remaining gentle on the digestive system, making bone broth especially useful when appetite is reduced or digestion is compromised. In addition, naturally occurring minerals and electrolytes help support hydration, nerve signalling and muscle function - all of which can be negatively affected during periods of stress and acute recovery. Together, these components provide a highly digestible form of nutritional support that assists healing, supports gut recovery, and helps facilitate a smoother return to normal function following surgery or acute illness.





Effective recovery from surgery, injury or acute illness depends heavily on gastrointestinal health. The gut plays a central role in nutrient absorption, inflammation regulation, immune signalling and barrier protection - all of which are commonly disrupted by physiological stress, anaesthesia, pain, reduced appetite and medications such as antibiotics or corticosteroids. When gut integrity is compromised, dogs are more likely to experience diarrhoea, nausea, reflux, prolonged inflammation and delayed recovery. Supporting the gut during this vulnerable period helps restore balance, reduces secondary complications, and improves overall recovery resilience.

Saccharomyces boulardii (SB)

SB can be particularly beneficial during acute recovery, as it helps stabilise the gut microbiome and protect intestinal barrier function at a time when the gut-immune axis is highly vulnerable. Physiological stress, anaesthesia, antibiotics, corticosteroids, and dietary factors commonly disrupt normal gut flora and increase intestinal permeability, which can delay recovery and predispose dogs to diarrhoea, dysbiosis, and secondary immune complications.

SB is a non-pathogenic probiotic yeast that survives gastric acid and is not inactivated by antibiotics, allowing it to exert protective effects even during or immediately after medical treatment. Research shows that SB helps inhibit pathogenic bacteria and their toxins, supports tight junction integrity within the intestinal lining, and modulates local immune responses by reducing pro-inflammatory cytokine release while enhancing secretory IgA production.

In veterinary settings, SB has been shown to reduce antibiotic-associated diarrhoea, improve stool quality, and support recovery in dogs with gastrointestinal disease. These effects make it a valuable adjunct following surgery or acute illness, when microbiome stability is critical to gut resilience and overall healing.



Gut Restore

While microbiome stabilisation is essential, acute recovery also places increased demand on the intestinal lining itself. Targeted nutrients and herbs can help soothe inflammation, support epithelial repair and restore gut barrier integrity during this phase.

L-glutamine serves as a primary fuel source for enterocytes and supports repair of the intestinal epithelium, which is often compromised following illness, anaesthesia or medication use. Demulcent herbs such as slippery elm and marshmallow root help soothe irritated mucosa and provide a protective barrier over inflamed tissue, while deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL) supports mucosal healing and inflammatory balance.

Appropriate fibre support also plays an important role in recovery. Gentle, gel-forming fibres such as psyllium husk help normalise stool consistency and support regularity, while fermentable fibres including inulin and larch arabinogalactan promote the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as butyrate. These SCFAs nourish colonocytes, strengthen gut barrier integrity, support a healthy microbiome balance and assist with toxin reduction. Fibre should always be introduced gradually, with adequate hydration, and adjusted based on stool quality, appetite and comfort during recovery.

Together, these strategies help restore gut function, reduce gastrointestinal discomfort, and support a smoother return to normal health following surgery or acute illness.



Dietary considerations for a smoother recovery

Nutrition plays a critical role in how efficiently a dog recovers from surgery, injury or acute illness. During recovery, the body has increased demands for protein, energy and micronutrients to support tissue repair, immune regulation and restoration of normal function. At the same time, digestion and appetite are often compromised, making food choice particularly important.

Prioritise digestibility and nutrient density

In the early recovery phase, meals should be easy to digest, anti-inflammatory and nutritionally complete, while avoiding unnecessary metabolic stress. Smaller, more frequent meals are often better tolerated and can help reduce nausea, reflux and appetite fluctuations. Highly digestible, animal-based proteins are essential, as protein requirements increase during healing to support wound repair and prevent muscle loss. Excessively fatty, heavily processed or highly refined foods are best avoided initially, as they can exacerbate gastrointestinal upset and inflammation.

Limit ultra-processed foods during recovery

Ultra-processed diets, including most dry kibble, are poorly suited to the demands of acute recovery. High-temperature processing can reduce nutrient bioavailability and promote the formation of inflammatory compounds, while the low moisture content places additional strain on digestion and hydration status. Many kibble diets are also disproportionately high in refined carbohydrates, which can increase inflammatory load and provide little support for tissue repair. During recovery, these factors may slow healing and compromise immune and gut function.

Transition toward species-appropriate, fresh foods

As appetite and digestion stabilise, a species-appropriate diet based on fresh, lightly cooked or raw foods is ideal. These diets tend to be less inflammatory, provide nutrients in more bioavailable forms, and better support connective tissue repair, gut integrity and immune resilience. Dietary fats should be introduced carefully but not avoided long term, as omega-3 fatty acids play an important role in inflammation resolution during recovery. Low-glycaemic vegetables can be included to provide fibre and phytonutrients that support gut microbiome recovery, while excessive refined carbohydrates (such as rice) are best minimised.

Support hydration and gradual transition

Adequate hydration is essential for circulation, nutrient delivery and healing. Moisture-rich foods and broths can be particularly helpful when appetite is reduced. As recovery progresses, the goal is a gradual transition from a short-term gentle recovery diet toward a balanced, minimally processed, nutrient-dense diet that supports long-term health and resilience.

A note on home-prepared diets

Home-prepared meals can be a valuable way to support recovery, particularly when appetite or digestion is compromised. However, dogs have very specific nutrient requirements, and nutritional imbalances can develop over time if meals are not properly formulated. For longer-term feeding, it's important to ensure meals are nutritionally complete and balanced, ideally by following a recipe developed by a qualified animal or veterinary nutritionist or by using an appropriate meal balancer.

Lifestyle measures to support convalescence

Following surgery, injury or acute illness, supportive lifestyle measures are just as important as diet and supplementation in promoting effective recovery and preventing setbacks.

Strict rest during the early healing phase is essential - even when your dog appears to be improving. Overexertion can delay tissue repair, increase inflammation and compromise surgical or injury outcomes. Activity should be reintroduced gradually and in a controlled manner, with short, calm leash walks replacing free running until strength, coordination and comfort have clearly returned.

Stress minimisation is equally important. Physical and emotional stress elevates cortisol, which can impair wound healing, disrupt gut function and prolong recovery. Maintaining a predictable routine, providing a quiet resting space, and using calm, gentle handling can significantly support the healing process. Adequate sleep and quality rest should be prioritised. A comfortable, warm sleeping area that minimises noise and stimulation allows the body to direct energy toward repair and recovery. During rest periods, low-impact environmental enrichment - such as food puzzles or gentle scent-based activities - can help reduce frustration without placing additional physical demands on the body.

Supporting hydration is also critical, particularly following illness, anaesthesia or medication use. Ensuring constant access to fresh water and offering moisture-rich meals or broths helps maintain circulation, organ function and tissue repair. Finally, regular monitoring during recovery is essential. Observing changes in appetite, stools, mobility, incision sites and behaviour allows early identification of potential issues so adjustments can be made promptly. Together, these lifestyle strategies help create a low-stress, recovery-focused environment that supports healing and a smoother return to normal function.

CanineCeuticals Range of Solutions



Gut Protect

Prebiotics, probiotics, herbs and enzymes to maintain optimum immune and digestive function.



Gut Restore

Designed to restore the health of the gastrointestinal tract.



Pure SB

For healthy gut flora balance during antibiotic use.



Beef Bone Broth+

Naturally nourishing for joints, skin, gut and immune health.



Organic Super Greens

Phytonutrients and antioxidants for optimal cellular health.



Replace-A-Bone

A complete calcium source for homemade diets to ensure optimum growth and bone health.



P.E.A Plus

A natural compound that may assist in the relief of inflammation, pain and itch.



Collagen Forte

Hydrolysed collagen peptides to maintain healthy connective tissues and mobility.



Pure Colostrum

A natural source of immune compounds to support whole-body wellness.





Organic Beef Kidney

Packed with essential vitamins and minerals for overall health and wellness.



Organic Beef Liver

A rich source of vitamin A to support healthy skin, coat and connective tissues.



Organic Organ Blend

A natural source of essential nutrients to support whole-body health and wellbeing



Organic Beef Pancreas

A natural source of enzymes to support healthy digestion and improve nutrient absorption.



Organic Beef Spleen

Rich in iron and immune-enhancing compounds unique to spleen tissue.



Mushroom Elixir

A mushroom blend traditionally used to support optimum immune function.



Pure Lion's Mane

To support the health and activity of the nervous system.



Pure Turkey Tail

For healthy immune function and whole-body resilience.



Pure Milk Thistle

Traditionally used to maintain healthy liver and digestive functions.



Stress-Ease

To aid in the maintenance of emotional wellbeing.



Relax

A blend of natural plant-based terpenes to support an overactive nervous system.

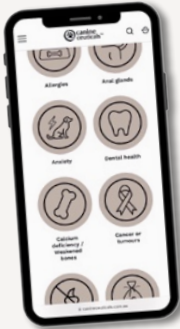


Cognition Care

For cognitive health, neurological support & healthy aging.

Resources

Health Quiz



Tell us about your canine companion's current health challenges and we'll guide you to which CanineCeuticals® products we believe can best support your dog's needs.

Natural Health for People and Pets Podcast

Learn about evidence-based health and nutrition from Narelle Cooke and Glenn Cooke, hosts of Natural Health for People and Pets.

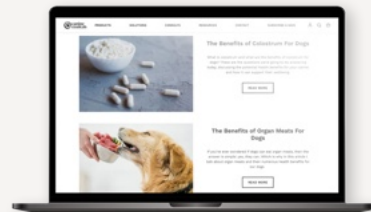


Free Recipes

Healthy raw food and baked treat recipes



Blogs



Unlock the secrets to boosting your dog's well-being with our holistic nutrition and health blog for expert tips and insights.

Online Consultations

If you're seeking more personalised support, we offer canine health consultations tailored to your dog's individual needs. These services are available following a veterinary diagnosis.

Consultations include the option to purchase tailored herbal tonics. A Custom Blend can provide targeted support for your dog's specific health concerns.



Connect with us!



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Natural Health for People and Pets



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CanineCeuticals® provides a premium, human-grade supplement range for dogs. We fuse ancient traditional medicine with the latest scientific evidence to create the most effective health solutions for your pet.

Created by an accredited Clinical Naturopath, Nutritionist and Herbalist, CanineCeuticals® offers a more holistic approach to supporting the core health of your dog to ensure they receive the best health outcome possible.

CanineCeuticals® uses human-grade ingredients (locally sourced in Australia wherever possible) to create pet-friendly oral powders, oral liquids and soft gel capsules.

We believe that good health starts from the inside out, which is why we provide full support for your dog's foundational health across all life stages.

Our range of products targets everything from allergy support to digestive health, joint health, emotional wellbeing, immune support, general health and wellness, nutritional support, and even liquid herbal solutions. With our full ingredient transparency, you can rest assured that your pet is getting the best possible care.



References available on request.



Narelle Cooke, accredited Clinical Naturopath, Nutritionist and Herbalist - Founder of CanineCeuticals®

I created CanineCeuticals® out of a deep passion for the health and wellbeing of our pets.

As a devoted pet parent to three French Bulldogs, a Rottweiler, and a Burmese cat, I wanted nothing more than to see my own animals live their happiest, healthiest, and longest lives.

But like many pet owners, I became increasingly frustrated and disheartened by the quality of products on the market. Too often, they were made with substandard ingredients and packed with artificial colours, flavours, and preservatives - additives that don't serve our pets' long-term health or vitality.

And so, CanineCeuticals® was born - a brand built on integrity, transparency, and a genuine commitment to helping our pets thrive.



Healthcare that
you would expect
for yourself.

