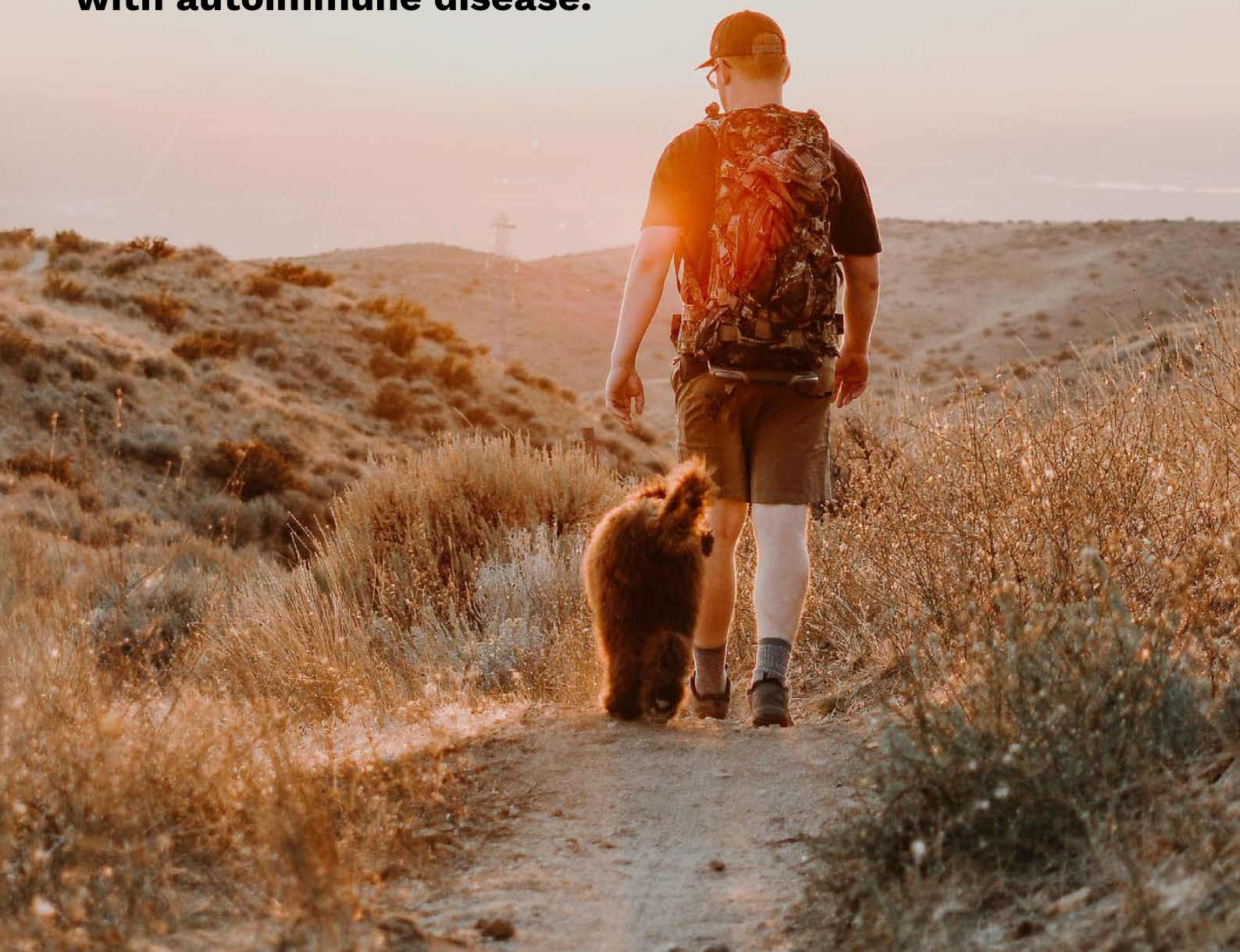




HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR DOG'S GENERAL IMMUNE HEALTH & AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

Guidance for supporting resilient, balanced immune function in dogs recovering from illness, facing recurrent infections, or living with autoimmune disease.



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

-DR. MICHAEL FOX

Immune health is about far more than simply fighting infection. A resilient immune system depends on strong gut barrier function, a balanced gut microbiome, appropriate inflammatory regulation, good nutritional status, and the ability to recover from physical and emotional stress. Much of the immune system is coordinated at the level of the gut, where it must constantly distinguish between harmless inputs such as food and commensal microbes, and genuine threats such as pathogens or damaged tissue. When that system is working well, it supports tolerance, containment, repair, and an appropriately measured inflammatory response rather than constant overreaction.

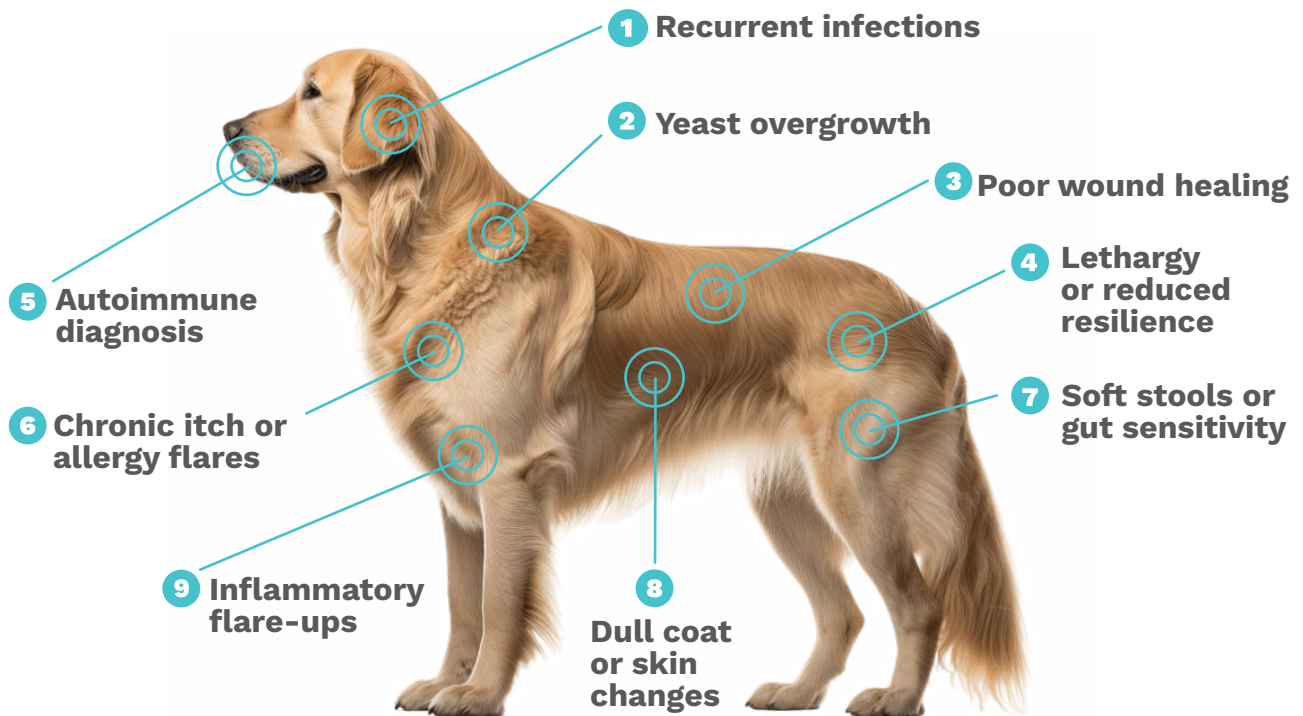
When immune health is under strain, dogs may show signs such as recurrent infections, chronic itch, poor recovery, lingering digestive issues, inflammatory flare-ups, or reduced vitality. In some dogs, immune dysfunction shows up as over-reactivity rather than weakness, for example in allergies, recurrent yeast overgrowth, or autoimmune disease. In autoimmune disease, the problem is not that the immune system is 'too weak', but that it has lost tolerance and is now reacting to the wrong targets. That's why support needs to be thoughtful: the goal is not to indiscriminately 'boost' immunity, but to support better regulation, barrier integrity, inflammatory balance, and resilience alongside appropriate veterinary care.

This guide focuses on practical, evidence-informed ways to support immune health from the inside out. It also offers a gentle, cautious approach to better managing autoimmune disease. That means looking beyond symptoms alone and paying attention to the systems that shape immune function day to day: the gut microbiome, the intestinal barrier, diet quality, nutrient sufficiency, stress load, recovery capacity, and the presence or absence of chronic inflammatory triggers. This broader perspective is especially important in dogs with recurring or complex issues, where immune strain is often not driven by one single factor.

By understanding immune health as a whole-body, highly regulated system, you can make more informed decisions about how to support your dog over time.

The aim of this guide is to help you build a steadier foundation for immune resilience, so your dog is better equipped to recover well, cope with everyday challenges, and maintain more stable health.

Common signs your dog is suffering from poor immune health



- 1 Recurrent infections:** Repeated ear, skin, urinary or respiratory infections can sometimes point to an underlying problem with the immune system or the body's natural protective barriers.
- 2 Yeast overgrowth:** Recurring yeast overgrowth in the ears, paws or skin folds often indicates an underlying allergy, disrupted skin barrier or altered local immune response. Dogs with atopic dermatitis may also have an imbalanced gut microbiota, suggesting a broader gut–skin connection.
- 3 Poor wound healing:** Cuts, hot spots or surgical wounds that take longer than expected to heal can suggest that local or systemic factors are interfering with normal tissue repair.
- 4 Lethargy or reduced resilience:** Dogs with reduced physiological resilience may seem more tired, have less stamina, or take longer to recover after illness, stress or exertion.
- 5 Autoimmune diagnosis:** Immune-mediated conditions require a cautious, individualised approach that aims to regulate an inappropriate immune response rather than broadly stimulate immune activity.
- 6 Chronic itch or allergy flares:** Atopy, red or itchy paws, recurrent ear irritation and seasonal skin flares can reflect an overactive allergic immune response, particularly to environmental allergens.
- 7 Soft stools or gut sensitivity:** Ongoing diarrhoea, gas or food sensitivity, or a slow return to normal after antibiotics, can suggest that the gut microbiome and gut–immune system are under strain.
- 8 Dull coat or skin changes:** Flaky skin, excessive shedding, poor coat condition or recurrent irritation can accompany chronic inflammatory skin disease.
- 9 Inflammatory flare-ups:** Recurrent swelling or soreness, persistent gut inflammation, or ongoing pain alongside other inflammatory signs can sometimes reflect poorly regulated immune and inflammatory activity.

Factors that can influence your dog's immune health

Immune resilience is influenced by far more than exposure to pathogens alone. The following factors can significantly affect how efficiently your dog regulates inflammation, responds to pathogens, and recovers from daily stressors or illness.

Nutrition: A nutrient-dense, biologically appropriate diet provides the building blocks needed for immune signalling, barrier integrity and tissue repair. Inadequate protein, essential fatty acids, micronutrients or calories can delay wound healing and prolong recovery.

Gut microbiome: A large proportion of immune activity is concentrated in the gastrointestinal tract. When the gut microbiome becomes imbalanced, this can disrupt immune and gut barrier regulation and promote inflammatory reactivity.

Barrier function: When intestinal barrier integrity is disrupted, microbes, microbial products, dietary antigens and toxins can cross more readily into underlying tissues, increasing immune exposure and amplifying inflammatory activation.

Stress: Prolonged physical or emotional stress can dysregulate cortisol signalling, disturb gut-barrier and microbial balance, and alter immune regulation, weakening some protective responses while promoting inflammatory over-reactivity.

Sleep and rest: Tissue repair, immune defence and recovery are supported by adequate rest and lower physiological stress. Disrupted sleep and prolonged stress can impair immune regulation and slow wound healing.

Medications: Antibiotics and some other medications - including high-dose corticosteroids and acid-suppressing drugs - can alter the canine gut microbiome and may affect gut-barrier and immune regulation.

Age and life stage: Puppies, seniors and dogs with chronic illness often have reduced physiological reserve and need more targeted support.

Environmental load: Allergens, environmental irritants and pollutants, mould, poor air quality and unstable routines can all add to the inflammatory burden.

Body condition and activity: Excess body fat is associated with chronic low-grade inflammation in dogs, while regular, appropriate movement can help regulate inflammatory signalling, support immune health, and promote lymphatic fluid movement through muscle activity.

Underlying disease: Chronic kidney disease, endocrine disease, cancer, gastrointestinal disease and autoimmune conditions often demand broader immune support.



Immune Health Starts Here

Immune support works best when it starts with the fundamentals: a healthy gut barrier, well-regulated inflammatory signalling, and the right nutritional and antioxidant support to help the body stay resilient over time.

To best support your dog, we have designed a 3-step immune support framework that targets the most important drivers of poor immune resilience and immune over-reactivity.*



*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.



The gut and immune system are closely linked. Your dog's digestive tract does more than break down food; it also helps the immune system decide what's safe and what needs a response. The gut lining acts as a protective barrier, while the gut microbiome helps 'train' immune cells to respond appropriately. When the gut barrier is strong and the microbiome is balanced, the immune system is more likely to stay calm and well regulated. When the gut is irritated or disrupted, immune responses can become more reactive, which is why supporting immune health often starts with nurturing the gut.

Gut Protect

Gut Protect is our foundational daily digestive and immune support formula. Its prebiotic blend of psyllium, inulin and larch arabinogalactan helps create a healthier gut environment by supporting beneficial bacteria and the production of short-chain fatty acids. These compounds nourish the cells lining the bowel, support gut-barrier integrity and help regulate communication between the microbiome and the immune system.

Psyllium contributes to this support by forming a hydrated gel within the digestive tract, helping maintain regular intestinal transit and a more stable environment at the gut lining. Alongside inulin and larch arabinogalactan, it supports beneficial microbial activity and the production of short-chain fatty acids. A well-supported gut barrier is important because it helps limit unnecessary exposure of the immune system to dietary and microbial triggers. Psyllium's ability to gently regulate stool consistency is an additional benefit for dogs with sensitive or variable digestion.



Canine research shows that prebiotics can influence both gastrointestinal and immune markers, including short-chain fatty acid production and stool quality. *Bacillus coagulans* MTCC 5856 adds a stable, spore-forming probiotic component that can survive gastrointestinal transit and complement this prebiotic support.

Gut Protect also contains DigeZyme®, a blend of α -amylase, protease, cellulase, lactase and lipase, which support the breakdown of carbohydrates, proteins, plant fibre, lactose and fats. By supporting macronutrient digestion in the upper gastrointestinal tract, digestive enzymes may reduce the amount of undigested material reaching the colon and becoming available for excessive microbial fermentation. This makes the formula relevant where gas, undigested food in the stool or inconsistent digestion suggests that food breakdown may be less efficient. Chamomile and fennel provide an additional layer of gentle herbal support for digestive comfort and post-meal gas.

Overall, this may help reduce the background 'immune noise' that builds when the gut is chronically irritated, making it useful for dogs with sensitive digestion, food reactivity, recurring anal gland issues, mild inflammatory bowel tendencies, or those needing long-term gut and immune resilience.

***Saccharomyces boulardii* (SB)**

Saccharomyces boulardii (SB) is a beneficial probiotic yeast that can be especially useful when the gut-immune system is under pressure, such as during or after antibiotics, digestive upset, illness, stress, or recovery.

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.

This makes SB a valuable tool for helping the gut return to a steadier baseline. In dogs, research has found that SB helped prevent or shorten antibiotic-induced diarrhoea and improved clinical signs, stool frequency (i.e. less poos), stool consistency (i.e. better formed poos), and body condition in dogs with chronic enteropathy.

For immune support, the key benefit is resilience: when the gut barrier and microbiome are more stable, there is less digestive disruption feeding into the immune system, giving the body a better foundation for recovery and long-term balance.



Bovine Colostrum

Bovine colostrum is naturally rich in immunoglobulins, lactoferrin, growth factors and proline-rich polypeptides, compounds that help defend the gut surface, support tissue repair and guide a more balanced immune response.

In dogs, dietary bovine colostrum has been shown to increase faecal IgA, improve vaccine antibody response, and support greater gut microbiome diversity and stability, which are all useful markers of gut-immune resilience. Human studies also suggest bovine colostrum can help reduce intestinal permeability, supporting the idea that it helps reinforce the gut barrier under stress.

Colostrum is not an immune stimulant. Instead, it helps support the body's protective barriers and promotes a balanced, appropriately regulated immune response. It may be especially useful for dogs with allergy-prone skin, recurrent infections, digestive sensitivity or poor vitality, as well as during puppyhood, ageing, stress or recovery.





Once the gut-immune axis is supported, the next priority is helping the body regulate inflammation appropriately rather than simply suppressing it. This is especially relevant in dogs with allergies, chronic inflammatory disease, or autoimmune disease, where the immune system is often overactive, poorly regulated, or both.

Omega-3 Support

Marine-derived omega-3 fatty acids, especially EPA and DHA, are best understood as immune-regulating nutrients, rather than ‘anti-inflammatories’. They become incorporated into cell membranes, including immune cell membranes, where they help shift the body away from producing highly inflammatory signalling compounds and toward producing more inflammation-resolving mediators, including resolvins, protectins and maresins. Put simply, omega-3s help the immune system respond with better control, rather than staying stuck in a cycle of excessive or prolonged inflammation.

This is particularly important for dogs with chronic inflammatory or immune-mediated conditions, where the goal is not to ‘switch off’ the immune system, but to support a more balanced response. In autoimmune disease, the immune system is misdirected toward the body’s own tissues; omega-3s have been studied for their ability to positively influence inflammatory cytokines, T-cell activity, antigen presentation and other immune pathways involved in autoimmune reactivity.

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 recovery from illness and periods of systemic inflammation, where excessive or prolonged inflammation can delay healing.

In dogs with immune-mediated or inflammatory conditions, high-quality marine omega support can be a valuable way to reduce the systemic inflammatory load without the gastrointestinal irritation commonly associated with many conventional anti-inflammatory medications.





Long-term immune resilience also depends on antioxidant protection, micronutrient sufficiency, and the body's ability to cope with chronic illness, oxidative stress and ageing. This step focuses on broader products that can help support vitality, antioxidant status and immune resilience over time.

Medicinal Mushrooms

Medicinal mushrooms contain naturally occurring polysaccharides, especially beta-glucans, which can interact with gut-associated immune tissue and influence immune cells involved in surveillance and defence, including macrophages, monocytes, natural killer cells and dendritic cells. Overall, they help 'coach' the immune system toward a more organised and resilient response, rather than just pushing it harder.

This makes medicinal mushrooms especially relevant for dogs carrying a higher inflammatory or immune burden, including seniors, dogs recovering from chronic illness, or dogs with poor vitality. A review of major medicinal mushrooms describes species such as Reishi, Maitake, Cordyceps, and Turkey Tail as having immune-modulating effects, with many actions linked to regulation of cytokines, the chemical messengers that shape inflammatory responses. Additionally, in a 2024 study in healthy dogs, Shiitake mushroom supplementation significantly increased plasma superoxide dismutase activity, an important antioxidant enzyme that helps neutralise free radicals and protect cells from oxidative stress.

For dog owners, the key benefit is that medicinal mushrooms provide a broad spectrum of compounds that may help the body maintain better immune communication, antioxidant defences, inflammatory balance and recovery capacity.



Organic Super Greens

Organic Super Greens provides a concentrated blend of plant-based nutrients from spirulina, chlorella, moringa and barley grass to support everyday immune resilience. For dogs with chronic inflammatory or autoimmune disease, it's important to nourish the body with compounds that help support cellular health, antioxidant defences and steadier inflammatory signalling. Oxidative stress is increasingly recognised as a contributor to many canine diseases, and chronic inflammation can increase the body's need for antioxidant and micronutrient support.

In a controlled dog study, spirulina supplementation was associated with stronger vaccine antibody responses, higher faecal IgA and greater gut microbiome stability. IgA is an important immune antibody found at mucosal surfaces, including the gut, where much of the immune system is trained and regulated. Alongside spirulina, chlorella, moringa and barley grass provide additional plant polyphenols, minerals and phytonutrients. Dietary polyphenols and plant bioactives are recognised for their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and immune-modulating activities, including effects on immune cells and inflammatory cytokines, which are the chemical messengers that shape immune responses.

While Organic Super Greens is not a replacement for a complete diet, veterinary care or prescribed autoimmune medication, it can be a useful food-based addition for dogs needing broader support for vitality, gut-immune health, antioxidant protection and long-term inflammatory balance.



Dietary considerations for stronger immune resilience

Nutrition plays a central role in how well a dog's immune system regulates itself. The creation of an internal environment that promotes steadier immune function involves complete nutrition, a healthy gut microbiome, reduced inflammation, and a diet that is consistent enough that the body is not constantly adapting to new inputs.

Start with nutritional completeness

Immune resilience depends on reliable access to the nutrients needed for tissue repair, gut barrier integrity, antioxidant defence, antibody production and healthy inflammatory signalling. Fresh food can be an excellent choice, but 'fresh' doesn't automatically mean nutritionally complete. Published analysis of home-prepared dog recipes has found widespread nutrient gaps, including deficiencies in calcium, zinc, copper, vitamin E, choline, iron and B vitamins, which is why long-term home-prepared meals should be professionally formulated and/or paired with an appropriate veterinary or canine nutritionist-designed meal balancer.

Prioritise digestibility and nutrient density

Dogs under immune stress often benefit from meals that are highly digestible, moisture-rich and nutrient dense. High-quality animal proteins provide amino acids for tissue repair, immune proteins and lean muscle maintenance, while vegetables and carefully chosen plant ingredients can provide fibre and phytonutrients that support the gut environment. Avoid unnecessary complexity; select a diet the dog digests well, maintains condition on, and can eat consistently without flare-ups.

Support the gut microbiome

The gut microbiome plays a major role in immune education, barrier function and protection against pathogens. When the microbiome is disrupted, immune responses can become less well regulated, which may contribute to recurring skin, ear, gut or inflammatory issues. Including well-tolerated fibre and prebiotic foods, such as cooked vegetables, pumpkin or targeted prebiotic fibres, can help feed beneficial microbes and support production of short-chain fatty acids, which nourish the cells lining the bowel and help maintain a healthier gut environment. Fibre should be introduced gradually and adjusted according to stool quality, appetite and comfort.

Keep body condition lean

Body condition is a key part of the immune plan. Excess fat tissue is associated with chronic low-grade inflammation in dogs, which can add to the overall inflammatory burden. Maintaining a lean, healthy body condition helps reduce inflammatory load, supports mobility, and improves the body's ability to recover and regulate itself.

Avoid unnecessary dietary chaos

For dogs with suspected food reactivity, constant rotation can make it almost impossible to know what's helping and what's making symptoms worse. A strict elimination diet remains the gold standard for identifying adverse food reactions, and it needs to be followed carefully, with no unplanned treats, chews or flavoured extras. Once a stable baseline is achieved, foods can be reintroduced methodically, so triggers are easier to identify.

Be thoughtful with raw feeding

Raw feeding can work well for some dogs when the diet is complete, balanced and handled safely. However, raw meat-based diets carry recognised risks, including bacterial contamination, antimicrobial-resistant organisms and pathogen shedding. For dogs on immunosuppressive medication, dogs with recurrent infections, very young or senior dogs, or households with immunocompromised people, a lightly cooked fresh diet may offer many of the benefits of raw feeding with a lower microbial risk.

Keep the plan steady

Immune resilience is built through consistency. The strongest dietary plan is usually not the most complicated one; it's the one that is complete, digestible, well tolerated and matched to the dog in front of you. Once a dog is stable, changes should be made slowly and intentionally, with careful monitoring of stools, skin, ears, appetite, energy and behaviour.



Lifestyle measures to support immune resilience

Lifestyle support is one of the most overlooked aspects of immune health. Diet and supplements can provide powerful internal support, but a dog's immune system is also shaped every day by stress, sleep, movement, body condition, environmental exposure and routine. For dogs with chronic inflammatory or autoimmune disease, the aim is to reduce the background load on the body, so the immune system has less to react to and more capacity to regulate itself.

Reduce stress load

Physical and emotional stress can increase inflammatory signalling and alter immune function, particularly when it's frequent or prolonged. This matters because many dogs with allergies, gut sensitivity or autoimmune disease are already operating with a higher baseline inflammatory burden. A calm, predictable routine can help lower that background pressure. Consistent mealtimes, gentle handling, a quiet resting space, and avoiding unnecessary over-arousal all help create a more stable internal environment for immune regulation.

Prioritise sleep and recovery

Rest is not passive. During quality sleep and deep rest, the body has a greater opportunity to repair tissue, regulate inflammation and restore normal physiological balance. Dogs with immune or autoimmune disease often benefit from a comfortable, low-stimulation sleep space away from household noise, foot traffic and constant interruption. If a dog is easily startled, restless, itchy at night, or unsettled after activity, improving the sleep environment can make a meaningful difference to overall resilience.

Incorporate appropriate movement

Movement supports circulation, lymphatic flow, muscle maintenance, joint health and emotional regulation. The key word is balance. Too little movement can contribute to weight gain, stiffness and poor lymphatic movement, while excessive exercise can increase physical stress and flare pain or inflammation in sensitive dogs. For most immune-compromised or inflammatory dogs, the best approach is regular, moderate, low-impact activity such as controlled walks, sniff-based outings, gentle hill work, swimming where appropriate, or physiotherapy-guided movement. In dogs with autoimmune disease, pain, fatigue or active flare-ups, activity should be adjusted to the dog's capacity on that day rather than forced to meet a fixed routine.

Minimise environmental triggers

Allergens, mould, dust, poor air quality, damp bedding, household chemicals, lawn treatments, smoke, fragrances and unstable routines can all add to the immune system's workload. These triggers may not cause disease by themselves, but they can accumulate and push a sensitive dog closer to a flare. Practical steps include washing bedding regularly, keeping resting areas dry and well ventilated, avoiding fragranced cleaning products and diffusers, rinsing or wiping

paws after grass exposure, drying damp skin folds or ears thoroughly, and reducing exposure to known environmental triggers where possible.

Maintain hydration

Hydration supports circulation, lymphatic movement, digestion, kidney function and temperature regulation. Dogs eating dry or low-moisture diets, dogs with diarrhoea, senior dogs, and dogs on certain medications may need extra attention to fluid intake. Moisture-rich meals, fresh water in multiple locations, and appropriate broths can all help maintain hydration, particularly during warmer weather, illness, medication use or recovery periods.

Monitor patterns, not just isolated symptoms

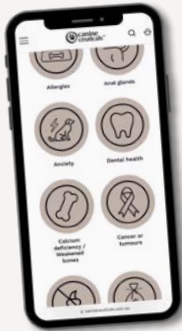
Immune and autoimmune conditions often fluctuate. A single itchy day, soft stool or tired morning may not mean the whole plan has failed, but repeated patterns are important. Track changes in skin, ears, stools, appetite, energy, sleep, mobility, thirst, urination and behaviour. This helps identify triggers, assess whether a plan is working, and decide when veterinary review is needed. For dogs on corticosteroids, immunosuppressants or other long-term medication, any supplement, diet or lifestyle change should be introduced gradually and monitored carefully.

Supporting immune resilience is not about pushing the immune system harder; it's about creating the conditions for it to regulate itself more effectively. With the right combination of veterinary care, complete nutrition, gut support, inflammatory balance, low-stress routines and careful monitoring, you can help your dog build a steadier foundation for comfort, recovery and long-term wellbeing.



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.

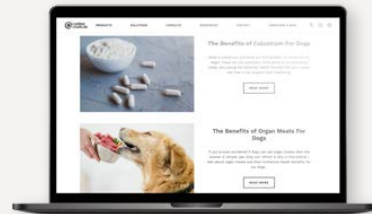


Free Recipes

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.



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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.



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