

Jacqueline Pinol:

The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast. My name is Jacqueline Pinol. I am an actor, documentary filmmaker and animal rescue advocate. The Canine Condition podcast is a platform to bring awareness to dog adoption and to provide all dog lovers and pet owners with information and resources on how to raise a healthy and well balanced dog. If you are thinking about getting your first dog or just want to know where and how you can help a dog in need, this is also a place for you. Do you always listen to what your doctor says? Do you take your doctor's advice as gospel, or do you weigh options? When choosing a doctor, do you consider how long he or she has been in practice? Or do you go by a recommendation because that doctor gave someone you know, a result they were very happy with?

I know how I would respond to those questions for myself. I pose them so you may reflect on how you might answer them. There is no doubt that a doctor knows more than a patient in their areas of medical expertise, given how long and how much they had to study, practice and learn in order to qualify and become a certified medical practitioner. But let's remember that doctors are human too. And if one doctor doesn't have the answer we want to hear, we don't have to put all our eggs in one basket. We are always free to go seek a second opinion or a third or however many we need in order to find a solution or in order to find a method of treatment to our health issue that we are comfortable pursuing.

And once we find the doctor we love and trust, as patients we do have a responsibility to follow a routine or a protocol in order to get that desired result, we have to be active and informed participants in the process. No doctor wants to have all that pressure on him or her, to be completely responsible for the outcome of something they suggested, recommended or prescribed. After all, as patients, we go about protocols differently, therefore, possibly altering the expected outcome. Some of us are more consistent and precise than others. Some of us are more relaxed or forgetful. Some of us just want a magic pill because we don't want to make time for anything else. Others of us prefer to make lifestyle changes along with any medicine or treatment given.

And let's not forget human bodies react differently to things based on a number of factors so results can always vary. Healthcare is not one size fits all. Well, I am here to tell you, this is true for our canines too. Veterinary medicine is not one size fits all. Within the canine species, there are so breeds and crossbreeds that are predisposed to good and bad genetics. And since our dogs depend on us 100% to make their healthcare decisions for them and to follow any necessary protocols when they are ill, we must do our homework, our due diligence to make sure we find the best ways to keep them healthy and safe throughout the course of their lifetime not just when they get sick. The more we learn and explore the better care we will find for our loyal canine companions.

My guest on the podcast today is a doctor of veterinary medicine and the director of Integrative Health Services at Centinela Animal Hospital in Inglewood, California. He brings decades of knowledge and experience to his successful practice. I always look at the human behind the title, and I will tell you that Dr. Richard Palmquist is one of the most kindhearted, open-minded, possibility seeking humans you could meet. Welcome to the podcast. Dr. Palmquist.

Dr. Palmquist:

I'm so happy to be here.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yes. I couldn't wait to have this chat with you. It's such a privilege to have you here. So we want to start with letting our listeners know how long you've been a practicing veterinarian and what brought you to the interest of integrative and Chinese veterinary medicine.

Dr. Palmquist:

Oh, that's a good question. I mean, I've been doing this for almost 40 years now. It's crazy.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Wow.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. I graduated from Colorado State University and thought that I was going to go into a large animal practice situation. And I had an injury that led me to do small animal medicine. So the injury was a pretty severe one. And instead of being able to work on cows and horses, I decided I was going to work on cats. So I worked on cats for a little while, and then I realized I really missed dogs. And so I became a dog and cat veterinarian here in Southern California, came out here in '83 and my wife is also a veterinarian. She's an acupuncturist.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, I love that.

Dr. Palmquist:

We settled here and we came out on the three-year plan because I didn't like big towns. I was a small town guy. But I just fell in love with Los Angeles and we've been here ever since. So I have a practice that's in Inglewood, California, and we see a lot of patients with chronic disease. It's a general practice, but we have a special interest in integrative and holistic care. So we had people coming from all over the United States to look at a different view of how we might approach some of these things.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And speaking of that, I know you know I'm a big fan of holistic integrative veterinary medicine. And it is also one of the reasons I came to your clinic all those years ago with my pug Gracie. And since then my growing pack, I want our listeners to know how I met you. You came as a recommendation to me from a coworker who had her dogs go to you. And I was looking to help my little pug. She was limping a lot and she was only one year old and another clinic had said she needed to surgery right away. And after coming to you and going through the holistic practice in veterinary medicine, we avoided that surgery. She never limped again and lived to be 16 years old as you know.

Dr. Palmquist:

Which was pretty cool.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yeah. So for our listeners of the podcast, what are some of the choices that people have for their pets when it comes to choosing between Western and holistic medicine? Because now Western medicine of course always has amazing scientific advancements in care, but holistic medicine has gained a very strong and reputable presence in veterinary care.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah, it has and a lot's really changed in the last 20 years. And particularly in the last 10 years, we have programs that teach integrative medicine in about a third of the U.S. veterinary schools. We have some

major programs involving University of Florida, their veterinary program has one of the top acupuncture programs in the United States there. So we've done a lot. The definition of the terms gets to be really confusing. And sometimes people use terms as marketing or sales, as opposed to really looking at what's going on. And also there's been a competition which I really think needs to end. I think that's part of the problem is that we think in these compartmentalizations, and for me, the philosophy of healing is as important as the practice.

And when we get patients who come to us and people are going, I want only holistic medicine, or I want only Western medicine. I think that's like saying, I want to practice in 1300 or I want to... it's like time has passed. We've discovered things and the biggest lesson of discovering things should be learning how things go together. So if we come from a place of love and this always sounds corny, but I'm a poet and I think this way, but if we come from a place of love, love allows us to connect. And if we can connect, then we can discover and reveal truth. And if we can discover truth and verify that truth, then we can share that and become in communication and help even more people survive better. And so this concept of holistic medicine, the word holistic with an H, so holistic H-O-L-I-S-T-I-C, holistic means thinking about the patient in terms of all their systems and their connections into the environment.

So I don't just treat the puppy, I treat the puppy who came from this mother who eats this diet, who lives in this environment, who has these people who live around them with these emotional problems or these physical problems. And that's all part of the whole. And so we also talk about wholistic sort of as a joke, which is a slightly different way to look at it because I think that wholistic medicine is actually a better way to look at it because even very good Western practitioners look at things, especially in veterinary medicine, from this more community and systems based situation. We're much less disconnected than in the human field where you might see a doctor who only treats your kidneys. And then another doctor only treats your heart. And another doctor who says, here's the vaccines that you're going to get.

So we have specialization in veterinary medicine, but veterinarians actually look at the whole patient, at the diet and all that stuff. Already it's part of our training, particularly from the agriculture and the livestock stuff. Because if you're raising animals on a farm, you have to take care of the whole environment, otherwise they don't grow up and produce and be as successful in their existence as they would have been. And that means the farmer loses money.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's a good point actually, I hadn't thought of that.

Dr. Palmquist:

Veterinary medicine comes from agriculture and agriculture is most successful when the animals are well cared for, the cows have healthier calves, they take less antibiotics, they take less veterinary expense. And so we're sort of reinventing the wheel with a lot of terminology like calling this sustainable agriculture or sustainable medicine or green medicine. All these things are actually just saying, let's take a more holistic look at things and say, how can we treat this patient in ways that first maximize their ability? So like all bodies have defects, everybody has a weakness. One person's legs are really good and they can run, another person's arms are really strong and another dog is super smart and can herd sheep. And another dog is dumb as opposed to that, but looks really pretty when you dress them up and will sit for hours, which is what they're supposed to do. And other ones don't sit and don't look pretty,

but they run around and kill everything that moves. And these are all the differences, the diversity of sort of this life that we live in.

Jacqueline Pinol:

The skepticism from people who have pets and don't want to pursue any type of holistic or integrative medicine is because they just don't know enough. But what I wanted you to share with us, what some of the choices are that they have, because I agree with you between having a blend. Sometimes we need Western, sometimes holistic and sometimes both worked for the other very well to address the problem.

Dr. Palmquist:

And that's why I really like this word integrative, because there's conventional medicine, there's holistic medicine. There's a lot more science in conventional medicine. There's a lot more heart, sometimes in holistic medicine, but not always proof. And that's where the quackery enters in on both sides. Integrative medicine says there's at least some scientific understanding of why this works. So we're using things that have some scientific research or have some mechanistic understanding. And I think really integrative medicine is where the two come together. It's the bridge between both. So for instance, I had a patient and we can talk about miracle cases, but I don't want to present every case that I see as a miracle case because that's not true. But the things that attach us to medicine are the relationships that we have. And then the outcomes that come when we don't expect them.

And I still practice integrative and holistic medicine because stuff happens when it shouldn't. From my experience, there's no hope for this patient, but the patient does a lot better than we think. And we just, as an example, had an osteosarcoma dog several months ago that had a bone cancer of the jaw and a very severe form of cancer that required that the entire lower jaw be removed.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh my goodness.

Dr. Palmquist:

So the dog's upper jaw and that tongue hangs out the bottom. And that is a real shocker to people. There are a lot of people who would say that should never have happened. That's a too aggressive of a treatment, what a terrible thing to do. But the dog is actually super happy and it was really happy before. And the man said, look, I really love this dog. So I'm pursuing it the best way I can with Western medicine and surgery. So they took off the jaw but right after they did that the cancer spread to the lungs, which happens a lot of times with osteosarcoma. So when he came to see me, the oncologist said, look, the cancer is spreading very quickly. There's nothing else that we can do. This cancer is not susceptible to chemo.

And so we would just say, we expect your dog to be dead in about six weeks. And when he came to see me, I told him he was too late and we should do other things. But as a result of the conversation, he said, when he dies I need to know that I've done everything I could do, but his quality of life is everything to me and he's running and he's happy and he's eating and he's good. And the end result of that was we treated him with herbs and he's now alive months later.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Really?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yep. He's the happiest dog you ever want to see but three months ago he came to me and he was developing tumors that were growing on his skin. And I told the guy the same thing. I said, this is spreading too fast. There's nothing more I can do for him herbally, but let's check him. And we found some things on his holistic exam that made us suspect that maybe he had some immune damage from some vaccinations and the cause doesn't really matter. But it led us to use a particular remedy. And we gave that homeopathic remedy. And then I just saw him last week and actually four of the tumors have disappeared. And the other tumors that were growing in his lungs are actually smaller and the dog is still running around and eating. And if you saw him you'd never know, except for the fact that his tongue hangs out the bottom of his nose. And you're like, what is wrong with that dog? I don't know why his tongue looks so weird.

Jacqueline Pinol:

But he's happy.

Dr. Palmquist:

But he's so happy. He's so happy.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And he's not suffering. He's not in pain, right?

Dr. Palmquist:

Right. And so I never in a million years thought that I could help that dog. But holistic medicine gave me a route to take through Chinese medicine and homeopathic medicine to look at him in a different way than Western medicine can. And because that man loved the dog and because we had the conversation and I was clear that he wasn't trying to hurt the dog or death was not an option, we can't have him die we have to just keep him alive regardless of his quality of life, we tried. And as a result that dogs running around and he's feeling a lot better. And every time I see him, it reminds me that veterinarians are just humans. And just like all other humans, we just have our experience. And so if our experience is that every time a dog with distemper comes into our office, we put it to sleep. Then no distemper dog survive.

If our experience is that dogs who got the distemper vaccine got sick and died and therefore we don't give any more dogs distemper vaccines and then dogs get distemper and die. That's bad, right? That's a holistic view. There's people out there that don't believe in the distemper vaccination. And if you do like I do, and you treat 80 distemper dogs in a year and you know that not one of them would have been sick if they'd been vaccinated, and you're doing this battle where if you're lucky, you save half the dogs and sometimes they're disabled and have seizures and all that stuff afterwards, that brings you to look at like, no, we don't want to get rid of vaccinations. And no, we don't want to give vaccines every year because that's not scientifically valid either.

We know that now because of science that distemper antibodies lasts a lot longer and we don't have to give as many shots. So now we're entering a point of medicine, which is a lot less authoritarian and a lot less about what's chiseled in marble on a wall, in some building, and it really helps that person and the animal that you're treating and this personalized medicine means that an oncologist can work with a homeopath, can work with an acupuncturist, can work with someone who does reiki. And if those treatments are making that patient more comfortable and they're doing well, and the owner wants to do that, there's no Charlatanism in that, that's called love, actually acting in community.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yeah, you do it for a human family member so why not do it for a canine family member?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. You certainly should have the option. And that doesn't mean that we can't put animals to sleep because we do every day in my practice. But the fact of the matter is that medicine is changing. And I really think that integrative medicine is the best of both worlds. And I think holistic medicine is beautiful because it's doing things that we still don't understand. We still don't know why that seems to work. Is that just placebo effect? Is that the power of the mind? Because we know that placebo effect happens in dogs and cats. The placebo effect for cats with arthritis pain is 20%. So if you give 100 cats, anything, 20% of them will improve for arthritis pain. That doesn't mean that the drug worked, it just means that the cat says I'm going to get better because I hate you giving me pills.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I love that.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. So integrative medicine is this connection between ancestral, experimental, strange kinds of medical practice. A lot of which have been with us for a long time. You look at acupuncture, it's been around for 3000 years and we're still learning about that. We're still barely touching the edge of how that works from a scientific standpoint. So I think the big question is, do we need to wait 3000 years more until we have the exact science that says, when you stick the needle here, these chemicals are released and that radio-frequency happens and then the stem cells do this. Do we need to know that? Or if we just know that when we stick the needle there, the dog makes a better response to vaccination. So why don't we just do that?

Jacqueline Pinol:

And I'm glad you brought up vaccines because it was from you that I learned very early on with my first dog, that I had the option to do this titer test. And that that would keep me from over vaccinating, Gracie. And that's what I've learned to do with all my dogs. They're always up to date on vaccines, but I do the titer. Can you explain that? I have met a lot of pet owners and a lot of people who rescue dogs and adopt them that don't know about this.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. So titer is spelled T-I-T-E-R and titer is a particular kind of a blood test and to titrate is an act that we do in the laboratory where we serially dilute things. So when we do a titration, we're diluting something more and more and more. So a titer is just a blood test that tells us how many times we can dilute the antibody and still have a protective amount of antibody present. So you get a number and that number tells us, Oh, there's enough antibody present in this dog that we don't have to worry that they could catch distemper or rabies or whatever. Now we can't titer for every disease. Just as a quick aside for COVID, you can have an antibody test on today and a few months later, you may not have any antibodies persisting, but you still have protection against COVID because you have protection from your cell immunity from your T cells. They remember what COVID looked like. And if it comes along, they protect you. So not all diseases can we do vaccine titers for, but for distemper and parvo and rabies, the titers are very effective. Unfortunately right now, for rabies in no states are rabies titers legal.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. I've never done those actually. I just do the three-year rabies on my dogs.

Dr. Palmquist:

Right. Which is the law. In California that's what you have to do. If you're a dog owner, that's the law. But that vaccine is probably good for longer up to seven years, research shows. So the question is, why are we giving it every three?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. And some people do it every year. And some people feel like, Hey, I don't want to vaccinate my dog every year. So at least when I've helped run adoptions with rescues, I do remind them, at least for distemper, parvo, you can offset the timing with a titer test. And that way they don't feel like they're over vaccinating.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. And most of our studies show that if you have a protective titer against distemper or parvo, that really it's almost impossible to catch the disease. We did a study in our practice where we looked at veterinary clinics across the United States. And we assayed over a 100,000 patients in that thing. And we only found one dog that got parvo with protective titers. It is possible to get sick again, but really fatality wise, the big thing with those diseases is, you get really sick and you need to stay in the hospital and have a big bill. If you're not significantly ill from it, we see dogs that have a lower titer and then they don't get a vaccine and they come back the next year and they have a higher titer, which means they encountered the virus. And now they're immune because their memory cells remember. And when they get exposed then they have natural protection so they don't get sick.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And where do our dogs get exposed to distemper and to parvo?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. So distemper is basically the same family of viruses as the human measles virus. So it's a similar situation to measles. And so the virus comes from the bodily fluids of patients that are sick. So urine and stool and coughing, wheezing, spit those kinds of things. So the dog has distemper and it coughs the virus onto a surface and your dog contacts that and ingests it or inhales it. And that's how the virus is spread. Parvo is the same way. Parvo is really persistent. A dog can have parvo in the poop and poop in your grass and a year later you can still recover infectious parvo virus.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh my gosh.

Dr. Palmquist:

Even from the sun and the snow and all that kind of stuff years later, the virus is still there. So puppies are most at risk for both those diseases. If they get exposed to the virus and that's a problem. So we can bring those in on our feet, parvo, you can go to the park or the beach and walk around and then come home. Then the puppy smells your shoes to figure out where you've been. And then a few days later, then they have vomiting and diarrhea and they're in the hospital.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Okay. And what about Bordatella? I know that depends on where the dog has been. If it's going to go to a groomer or a doggy daycare or a dog park, but do you think that it's best to always have them with Bordatella? Or is that something that it's left up to the discretion of the pet owner?

Dr. Palmquist:

I think everything except rabies is pretty much should be left up to the discretion of the pet owner. And I really believe in personalized vaccinations. So what's appropriate for a pet at my practice, and the risk factors that we have here is different than one in Northern California, because we have different disease prevalences. So to get back to the Bordatella though, the American Animal Hospital Association categorizes Bordatella as a non-core vaccination, which means an elective vaccination. So if your dog travels or they stay at boarding kennel, or they get groomed where they have contact with a lot of other dogs or they go to dog parks where they're playing with other dogs on a regular basis, then you could consider that vaccination. It's not the best of vaccines, to be honest. And if your dog is mostly home and doesn't do a lot of stuff, it's a vaccine that could be left out. My own personal dogs are not vaccinating for Bordatella.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Okay. And what about that one that I've heard a lot about and that people ask when they adopt a dog because they're veterinarians, especially in the East Coast required is leptospirosis. Well, I don't know what leptospirosis is.

Dr. Palmquist:

Leptospirosis is a nasty disease. It's a spirochete, syphilis is a spirochete, they're little spiral bacteria, and they can cause a lot of difficulty. Leptospirosis causes a bad disease involving the kidneys and the liver. It's contagious to people which makes it relevant in the conversation of trying to control it. And unfortunately, the leptospirosis vaccine is one of the components of the vaccine most likely to cause serious reactions, anaphylaxis, and even sometimes death. So if you don't have leptospirosis as a prevalent disease in your area, that's a vaccine that you may decide not to use. And for instance, in my practice, we have only seen one case of leptospirosis since 1986, when I was there, and that case came from Northern California from a farm dog that was drinking water that was contaminated. So certain parts of the country have bigger problems.

And so the leptospirosis vaccine prevents the dogs from getting really, really sick from the disease, but it doesn't always prevent them from spreading the disease. So it's a partial sort of an immunity. So if you have exposure to leptospirosis, if your dog's on a farm, if they're running through water, if you have a lot of rats, because one of the ways it's spread is the urine from an infected rodent, like urinates in the water bowl and then the dogs drink that water and then they become sick. So it's a really awful disease. That's treatable with antibiotics, but it can be pretty devastating.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Thank you for sharing that.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. Most of our L.A. dogs aren't leptospirosis vaccinated.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right, mine are not. But then again, to our listeners, depending on what area of the country you live in, or if you're a vet is saying it's safer to have the leptospirosis it's probably given because of the region. So it's always good to look that up and find that information out depending on where you live. I want to address something that we talked about when we interviewed you for our dogumentary, which is now in post-production and for our podcast listeners, I wanted to bring this up, what can you tell us? I mean, you see so many dogs, all breeds, ages and sizes is the fact that a pure bred dog versus a mixed breed or a mutt, a guarantee of better health throughout its lifetime, does it matter where they come from and what their breed is?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. It does and there's all kinds of differences. There's good health between both purebreds and mixed breed dogs. There is a thing that's called hybrid vigor, which is a genetic principle that says when you keep breeding things internally, you get concentrated bad genes, as well as good genes. We all laugh about jokes about people marrying their cousins and not being as bright as the original and all that stuff. And that was the problem for the Royal families in Europe is that they all married within one bloodline and they ended up with hemophilia and dementia and all kinds of weird things because they're concentrating the same genes and not having diversity.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's so interesting. We learn about that in history class. I recall that.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah, exactly. And so it applies genetically too. So one of the principles of life is that we need diversity and richness. Diversity and richness is how much of something you have, a whole lot of different opportunities. Richness is how much of each one of those things do you have. So when we're talking about genetics, we want huge amounts of diversity. You might have 15 or 20 copies of a particular gene, if you have different copies of a gene that covers up disease a different way, you're less likely to get sick because your body has different solutions. So purebreds that are bred in really narrow amounts of dogs, so there's not very many dogs, they concentrate the good genes that make the breed look like the breed, but they also can inadvertently concentrate the genes that are problematic, like for instance, in golden retrievers.

So when a breed of dog gets popular, then they get overbred because they just get bred for sales as opposed to quality. And so when people want them, then any golden retriever is good and what's happened is now golden retrievers they're number one cancer breed in the United States because they got popular. They're really sweet dogs. They're the most loving, lovely family dogs you could ever want, but they got popular, they got inbred. And now they're very much prone to get cancer. So golden retrievers are prone to that, every breed has its predispositions. Dobermanns are more prone to get certain kinds of heart disease, but mixed breed dogs can get those diseases too, but they have a tendency to have this thing called hybrid vigor, which means because they've got more diversity in their genome, in their genes, then they have less susceptibility to some of those genetic diseases.

Jacqueline Pinol:

So it's just about really there's information out there for us to do our homework. And I know plenty of personal friends who are fixated on purebreds or buying from breeders versus adoption and to each his

own, but do your homework because don't complain later when there's a bunch of problems and you thought you were doing the best thing by getting a purebred. That's just my opinion.

Dr. Palmquist:

I think it's really critical to do your research before. Don't just pick based on looks. It's good advice in relationships generally.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's true.

Dr. Palmquist:

Just because they look like something you thought was cool, doesn't mean they're necessarily great. Like say Oriental shorthair cats, a lot of people get attracted to them because they have less hair. They have funny little faces, but they're really inbred. So they have a lot more medical problems and people don't realize that. And if you don't ask your vet, say like, are these guys healthy, Shar Peis, for instance. Shar Peis have huge amounts of skin problems. So if we talk about it beforehand, then you're less likely to make a choice and you can ask the breeder too, do your dogs get tumors?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yes. And hopefully if somebody is forcing you to go to a breeder, which I'm not, will the breeder be honest?

Dr. Palmquist:

There's a whole rescue community of purebreds, I have one mixed breed, I have one maltipoo and then I have one purebred standard poodle, but we didn't buy the poodle, the poodle came to us the way veterinarians get dogs because she had a nervous anxiety peeing problem. So we adopted her because the people couldn't handle her urination issue.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yeah, I do. I have one and you know what, I actually had one, she just would leak, have leaky bladder and I ended up getting Chinese herbs for bladder control and urination incontinence and within two months, no more, never had that problem again.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. It doesn't always work, but when it does, it's pretty cool.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I know, I love it. And then one other one that I want to talk medically before we jump into other fun subjects with you, heartworm, how easy is it to prevent, but how bad is it when the dogs do get it and why are more and more dogs getting it around the United States?

Dr. Palmquist:

A heartworm, I don't like to jump on the whole of climate change thing because it's a very emotionally charged thing. I think the bottom line is we should take care of where we live and we should do things

that make things better. Warming occurs, insects spread into more and more areas. And then diseases also spread and hosts adapt. So if you don't have the mosquito that spreads heartworm in your area, but then it comes to live in your area. Then heartworm can come too. Dogs are traveling all over the United States. So we very commonly have dogs that are bi-coastal. They live sometimes here in California, sometimes in New York or in Wisconsin or other kinds of places. And so we have to know what the local health risks are. And we sort of have to rely on our local veterinarians because they know that issue better than just about anybody, but heartworm is a parasite that spread by mosquitoes.

So a dog that has heartworm, which is this about six inch worm that lives inside the heart of your dog and then has little tiny microscopic babies that circulate around in the bloodstream called microfilaria, a mosquito sucks one of those up and then bites another dog and squirts it in. And then it swims around in that dog until it grows up into a three inch or a four inch worm in the heart of that dog. So one worm doesn't really hurt you but if you start getting more worms in the heart, it actually fills up the chamber of the heart and the heart can't pump blood efficiently. So ultimately it can lead to heart failure and kidney disease and other medical problems related to that. It's very easy to prevent and the medication that's used to prevent heartworm for the most part is extremely safe and it's very low side effects.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It's a monthly chewable, right?

Dr. Palmquist:

Right. And the drug doesn't stay. One of the things that we find a lot of people that are nervous about heartworm think it's a flea product where the poison is there for the entire month and the medication that's used is not as toxic as flea control actually, for heartworm medication. And in fact, one of the agents, ivermectin people might recognize because some people are using it actually as a preventative for COVID, it's an immune stimulant. So like all drugs, there's good and bad. So a low dose of heartworm medication eradicates all those little invisible microscopic parasites once a month. So it's basically just a dewormer, but those little baby worms are the ones that are susceptible to that medication. When they get older, they get resistant. And that's when they grow into the big worms that cause all the problems. Heartworm, you can look at maps, they're published. You can just Google heartworm disease and you can see whether it's a problem in your area. It's reportable. You can also go to your county public health department and actually see how many cases have been reported.

And so here in Los Angeles, we never had any and then we had the drought and then after the drought, we got a bunch of rain. And during those heavy rain periods, the mosquitoes moved down from Santa Barbara. And so we started seeing some heartworm. We've been seeing a lot less in the last two years. And we don't see that much to start out with, but we did have a case in El Segundo. And I just recently had a celebrity's dog in Beverly Hills that was diagnosed that her neighbor told her not to use heartworm medication because we didn't have heartworm. And to your question about how you treat it, it's treated by arsenic injections. So the treatment is pretty icky and it hurts. It's actually a pretty painful injection and it has to be given a couple of times and most of the dogs get through it, but some dogs can actually die from heartworm therapy. So here in California, the risk is low in Southern California, but it's much higher in Northern California.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And areas, I know I've adopted dogs in the South from Georgia and it's more of a tropical climate during some times a year, lots of rain. So two of them actually had heartworm when they were rescued. And

have since then been treated of course, but I definitely took an interest in following up on learning about heartworm because my two babies had it.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. And we had during the hurricanes from Louisiana, because we had semi-loads full of dogs that were brought for rescue here in California, almost 100% of those dogs were infected with heartworm.

Jacqueline Pinol:

That's true. During hurricane Katrina, right?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. They all had to be treated, all those dogs coming in, they all had heartworm.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Okay. So I see why it's important for all of us who have our dogs and our pets to prevent these diseases when it's just later, it's not just vet bills, but it's a lot of heartache for us as the humans as well. Not just the dogs.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah and if you're in a low area, you can just have your dog tested once a year. And if they're negative, you don't have to worry about it. And it's important to know your dog's negative because if they have it, they can spread it to your neighbor's dog too. So it's a community issue.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. You were saying, because if the mosquito were to bite your dog and you didn't know it had it, and then it goes to the neighbor's house and bites their dog, that's how they would get it, right?

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah. And right now I've been told, and I don't have the current stuff, but I think last year they were looking at about 20% of the coyote population as positive for heartworm in certain parts of L.A., which means the mosquito populations there are infested.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It's just better safe than sorry. Especially if the prevention is so easy to get and not harmful to the dog, those of us who advocate for dog adoption and dog rescue are always trying to make sure that all dogs are spayed and neutered. And I'm sure in your practice you do plenty of spay and neuter. But we also do meet a lot of people who don't want to spay or neuter their dogs or who want to adopt a dog but they have one that's not fixed at home. So the rescue says, sorry, until your dog is fixed we can't adopt out. And then they get angry and they threaten with going to a breeder and the stories are endless. What can you say to us about why it is important and beneficial to spay and neuter your dog?

Dr. Palmquist:

Well, unfortunately this issue has become much more complicated in the last five years because it's been found that spayed and neutered dogs live shorter than dogs who are intact. And that fact has really kind of rocked the veterinary community. And we used to tell people we want to spay all the dogs, obviously

for reproductive reasons because spayed dogs don't have unwanted puppies and some people would respond by, well, I have a door and a fence and my dog doesn't go out, so I don't need it to be spayed for reproductive. And then we say, well, the big kicker on this was that for female dogs, especially breast cancer, which is the number three cancer of dogs is 100% prevented by spaying your dog six months or earlier. So if we spay dogs around six months, they don't have puppies and they actually don't get breast cancer.

Dr. Palmquist:

They also don't get uterine infections, which is a big problem for a lot of dogs when they hit older than six or seven years, they go through heat and about a month and a half after they go through their heat cycle, they get a horrible uterine infection and present to the emergency room and have to get big, expensive surgery and all that. But now it's a lot more complicated because it's now been found from research that especially in the large breed dogs, that spaying decreases their risk of breast cancer, but again can increase their risk for bone cancer and spleen cancer, which are also very common cancers in dogs. So it's becoming a real evidence-based argument about what we should do. And generally speaking, we still favor spaying and neutering and all my dogs personally are spayed and neutered.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yeah, so are mine.

Dr. Palmquist:

In large breed dogs, depending on how the dogs behave, there are real personal choices that have to be made. If you leave your intact male whole, he's much more likely to develop prostatic disease. We used to think they were more prone to get prosthetic cancer, but that's now been to not be true that actually neutered dogs and intact dogs both can get prostate cancer. So fortunately for us, prostate cancer isn't as common in dogs as it is in people, but those are rough things. So behaviorally, if you leave a male intact, they're more likely to develop those secondary male characteristics, which are running away and breeding and getting in fights.

And we kind of want to stop our dogs developmentally mostly in that early adolescent kind of puppy phase mentally, so that they don't get into some of the other kind of trouble issues, but it isn't as clear of a decision as it used to be. And I think every person has to kind of meet with their veterinarian and have a conversation. And of course in rescue, rescue groups are going to spay and neuter because they're about decreasing unwanted and uncared for pets. And so it's, I think a really important part of rescue to have that done.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yes. I tend to think, look, they're all susceptible to anything and everything because as humans we are too, no matter how healthy we are. Sometimes we have really healthy lifestyles and we develop something that's chronic or terminal and your mind is like, wait a minute, how did that happen? So with dogs, isn't it the same? The benefit is greater to spay and neuter for a number of reasons, but also then the quality of life you give the dog when spayed and neutered could increase your chances of a healthier life, and preventing those cancers?

Dr. Palmquist:

Absolutely, I think. I hate breast cancer because it's 100% preventable disease. So every time I see a dog who's not been spayed, who's now 10 years old and has got a big breast tumor. And if they're owned by

people who can't afford to go to surgery or they've waited too long to go to surgery and it's going to be kind of a hopeless situation while we work with that patient, every one of those I see they cut my heart out because I know that it could have been prevented if the dog was just spayed and that makes me very, very sad.

But I think we have to be careful about things like early spay and neuter, passing laws that say you have to spay your dog 13 weeks of age. I think those kinds of laws are ill-advised, I think for spay and neuter group, if you're doing rescue and you pretty much spay and neuter everything you get, as soon as you can, because you can't always trust that people are going to do the surgery and you don't want more patients coming back into the rescue because mom went out there and had 16 puppies last year and that's a very big issue.

Jacqueline Pinol:

It's a big issue because even I, I'm a very big advocate of spay and neuter. And of course I think dogs should be spayed and neutered, but I also have a funny feeling about spaying and neutering them too young. I feel like you said, six months, eight months to a year is a good window. But then what happens if rescues are rescuing 12 week old puppies and adopting them out at that age?

Dr. Palmquist:

I still tell people I prefer spaying, for large breed dogs, we may wait even longer, but six months versus that 13, 14 weeks thing.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, okay. So yeah. I just feel like it developmentally feels right. And you know how something in your gut just tells you. And you're just like, I know they're saying that as the rescue, but it just doesn't feel right. However, I know what they're doing, which is, Hey, I'm being held accountable by the shelters because we have to spay and neuter these puppies. But hopefully, and I know certain groups work with staying in touch with the doctors, doing follow-up phone calls and visits and actually offering vouchers, where \$100 or \$200 will go toward the spay and neuter of the dog once that adopter gets their dog to the vet. And that's incentive for them to follow up on that.

Dr. Palmquist:

Absolutely. And I think it's good policy too. People have a lot of different individual ideas. The idea that a neutered dog is not a good dog, they're stupid if you neuter them and brains are on the other end of the dog.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. Lots of men, and I have to say, I've actually met men who are like, no, no, no, you can't take the manhood away from my dog. He's got to be like a man. And it's like, it's a dog.

Dr. Palmquist:

He's not a man, he's a dog.

Jacqueline Pinol:

He's masculine, but it doesn't take away his masculinity. That one always boggles my mind. I don't know how we're going to get over that one.

Dr. Palmquist:

It's all the cultural issues, we have all the cultural issues to deal with the way we deal with each other as individuals, the way we deal with other species, the way we deal with the planet. And in general, all these things are things that we need to move along and move forward with. And that's what becomes important.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Do you have an opinion or are you comfortable sharing an opinion about dog nutrition, about commercial kibble foods versus human grade cooked foods and raw dog foods? There's just a lot of choices nowadays.

Dr. Palmquist:

There's a lot of choices and there are a lot of individual requirements. So first of all, there's no food that's good for all dogs. There's not one food that I can recommend that every dog will do well on. And that's important to note. A good, complete diet is better than junk, so eating crap that people are throwing away from their table at night may or may not be such a good idea, but dogs and people co-evolved. We had wolves that moved in with us and they helped us hunt. And then they shared in what we killed and what was left over and stuff. And it's hard to believe that a Maltipoo is a wolf because they aren't the same. They've actually co-evolved through aristocracy to eat court food in the castle and sit on people's laps and be fluffy and bottom line on food is I think that we are going to find in the next 10 years, that one of the worst things that we're doing right now is feeding dry dog food.

And the reason for that is there are chemicals called advanced glycation end products. And when you cook fat, carbohydrate and protein together at high temperatures, you get browning. When you go to a French restaurant, they put the butter in the pan and then they put the flour in the pan and they stir roux that around until it turns brown. They're making advanced glycation end products. Advanced glycation end products tastes delicious. This is why chocolate chip cookies taste good because we need dough and you put it in the oven it turns brown and crunchy. So that's making advanced glycation end products. So nobody does this on purpose to hurt people, but these substances are in extremely high amounts in dry dog food. You can't make a dry dog food without making advanced glycation end products. And we now know there's some unpublished work that's going to be published soon, but we now know that if you take dry mouse chow, increase the advanced glycation end product in it, by just simply heating the diet.

So you take mouse chow, and then you take the same mouse chow and put it in the autoclave and heat it up and then serve it to mice, we're actually seeing the mice develop carcinoma in situ in the breast and the prostate in as short a period of time as just a few weeks. So this is scary when you consider the rate of breast cancer and prostate cancer for humans. And then if we add other things in there, like cope toxins, things that are toxic, like glyphosate and mold toxin, and some of these other things that are present in dry dog foods, we don't know what happens when you mix those together, but we've been gradually becoming sort of more and more concerned about this. And now actually reputable research is starting to be funded. And I think over the next few years, we're going to have some fairly scary answers, but I can tell you that I have cases where people don't have a lot of money and all we do is take them off dry dog food, same brand, just feed the can instead of the dry and the medical condition disappears.

And then we put them back on the dry food and it comes back. So dry food is very high in carbohydrate, it's a cookie. So it can be up to 35% sugar equivalence. So if we're feeding cookies to our dogs, we shouldn't be surprised that they get diseases that come from eating a higher sugar. Higher sugar based diets change which bacteria grow in the intestinal track and the bacteria that like to grow in the

intestinal tract normally in diets that are high in sugar also tend to cause inflammation systemically. So since all disease that we treat in conventional medicine, that's a chronic disease, starts out with damage to the energy production part of the cell and chronic inflammation. Anything that makes chronic inflammation is in essence feeding disease to make our profession more financially successful.

And no one's doing this on purpose. I'm here to tell you, I really don't believe that pet food companies make dry food because they want to make animals sick. But I think that dry food is going to be linked to a lot of different things. And I'm going to be criticized for saying this right now, but flat out, I think people need to stop feeding dry food, if they do feed dry because I mean, for some people financially, you've got a 200 pound Mastiff. If you're feeding that one fresh food, which is the best thing to feed it's 1600 bucks a month for food, you can't do it.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right. That's the unfortunate part. It is hard to make that financial switch. I decided to make it this past year. I was home so much more in 2020, and I started to think more about the little things and paying attention to this aspect of my dog's lives. I got them all off of dry dog food.

Dr. Palmquist:

And how long until you saw the change in vitality?

Jacqueline Pinol:

Probably within six weeks, their coat, Oh my gosh. Their coat is amazing.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah, 30 to 60 days, their coats change.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And I don't have fleas anymore. And by chance I just happened to speak to someone who said that they thought feeding them the human grade, it's still cooked dog food. It has all the nutrients, but that it would keep fleas away. Their breath doesn't stink. There's so many little pluses and I don't have vet bills.

Dr. Palmquist:

Yeah, it's one of those things where it's actually really hard to accept. When I went to my first conference and the scientific evidence about over vaccination was presented and vaccine damage was presented. I physically got sick during the lecture and laughed because I went to veterinary school to help animals. And I believe that when I was getting vaccinations that I was helping them and I still believe in vaccinations, but I don't believe in over vaccinating. And I think we have to recognize that the change in understanding has to come.

And so if we're busy treating all these diseases that may be worsened by these advanced glycation end products and potentially other things like life is saved in the food, good food is necessary for good health. That's true from the ground all the way to the air. If our agriculture isn't holistic, if we're doing monoculture where we're growing only one kind of organism on hundreds and hundreds of acres and spraying the ground with all kinds of poisons, we're not helping the environment. We're not helping with carbon capture. So the foods that we feed the body responds to healthy foods. So food that's raised in rich soil, that's organic is healthier than food that's sprayed with a bunch of insecticides.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Yeah. Definitely, that one is worth the research. It's worth asking questions, reading articles, and exploring this topic for any pet owner. I'm very passionate about this topic because I've seen such a change in all of my dogs, all for the positive. And I don't have that vet bills other than my annual checkups and your annual blood work to see that everybody's doing okay.

Dr. Palmquist:

That's the ticket. And rather than be absolutist about anybody who feeds dry food is a terrible person or whatever, these are not helpful conversations. You can make a huge difference if you have a big dog that needs to eat dry food for financial reasons or whatever reason you choose to feed them that, if you feed them fresh food with it, if you feed them some meat and some vegetables, some lower carb kinds of things, that fresh food actually helps undo a lot of the junk from the other diet. And I will just put this out there because we don't know if this is true or not, but there's some preliminary research that suggests that asparagus may help with the damage from advanced glycation end products. So if you are someplace, if you live in an area where there's a river bottom and you've got wild asparagus everywhere, like where I grew up, throwing some asparagus in your dog's bowl is not a bad thing.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Right, there are ways to offset. I know cost is obviously a big concern, but if we could do anything to just make some little changes here and there, it's definitely worth it for our pocketbooks in the long run, I think, and for our hearts so that we don't have to see them get sick and go through these horrible elements later on. So before I let you go, one last big question about the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Foundation, I found out about them through you, I used to see a lot of their fundraising online as well. What does this foundation advocate for and why is it so important that they raise necessary funds?

Dr. Palmquist:

Well, I appreciate you asking me about them, this is a passion of mine. I came to alternative medicine because I thought it was quackery and I flew from Los Angeles to New York to get this guy's license revoked. And that story is in this new movie that's coming out called The Dog Doc.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Wow. The Dog Doc. Okay. I got to watch that.

Dr. Palmquist:

So if you want that story, you can watch that movie and you'll learn about it there. But the interesting thing about this is that I thought that alternative medicine was quackery and was harmful and was only done by people who are too stupid to practice high quality Western medicine. I thought all those things, I flew to his practice. I stayed with him for two weeks and I saw miracle after miracle, things that are not possible happen. And that caused me to change the way that I practice. And part of my shock sort of in that period was discovering that we weren't taught everything that there was to know about veterinary medicine in veterinary school. And then in fact, the people that were teaching us didn't know about it. And in fact, oftentimes were biased and said things that weren't factually true at all. And I said, the only way we'll change that is if we start to fund research that actually verifies what we're talking about.

So the foundation was started by a guy named Dr. Carvel Tiekert. And the purpose of the foundation was actually to fund research and clinical research for animals. We do no disease induction, so we don't hurt

any research animals at the foundation. One of the studies we have now is looking at lymphosarcoma, comparing standard chemotherapy to chemotherapy plus Chinese herbs. And then we can actually prove that the Chinese herbs improve survival and quality of life. And then we can publish that study and they actually help other veterinarians to move towards what we're doing. So that's what the foundation does. We need \$20 million to really make the impact that we need to do. And we have fundraisers usually in May and November, every year. And then we have... Oops, my dogs want you to support AHVMF.

Jacqueline Pinol:

They want you to donate. So please look out for those fundraisers for AHVMf.org. If you don't mind, I would love to add that link to the show notes of this podcast episode. That way people can scroll down on the podcast channel and just click on the link.

Dr. Palmquist:

And that would be great.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Okay, great. So before I let you go, tell me, how has your practice as a veterinarian and the love of your dogs changed you as a person?

Dr. Palmquist:

I'm a lot different now. I used to be a very science oriented kind of geeky guy. And now I'm kind of a geeky guy that spends a lot of time sort of witnessing the power of love. And I have this saying that I sign my emails with, which is, if it's love, it's done, the rest is just the universe shaking out the lies.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, I like that.

Dr. Palmquist:

And veterinary practice is that, when it's love, it's done, they're healthy or they're finished and ready to go on their next journey. When it's something other than that, then we have to shake out the lies and go, Oh, you got to stop that dry food. Or you got to start feeding more fresh food, or you need to start going for walks, or you need to stop hating your husband so much that you're abusing alcohol and smoking meth. And you got to get off the street and do something. And people change their lives for dogs when they won't change their lives for people. I have more clients that we get to stop smoking when they learn that their cats are 14 times more likely to get lymphosarcoma because they smoke while they hold them on their lap, they won't stop smoking because of their grandkids or their husband, but they'll stop smoking because they don't want to give their cat cancer.

So animals are this form of love that we're presented with. And everybody in rescue knows this. And if we can open a person's heart, just a small amount to love in any particular circle. And then that love can go somewhere else and open somebody else's heart, that's how we heal the world, right? One rescue dog at a time, one herb at a time, give the dog that's stray on the street a hot dog until you can catch them kind of a time. That's how we do it.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Just one at a time.

Dr. Palmquist:

And we learn a lot about ourselves and we learn a lot that isn't true, and there's a Bible quote that I just love, which says, test all things and keep what's good. And I think that's what we need to do.

Jacqueline Pinol:

Oh, that's beautiful. Thank you, Dr. Palmquist for just sharing the plethora of knowledge that you have. And it's just so wonderful to speak to you and get all this information out to our listeners. I learn so much every time I get to speak to you. So thank you for being on the podcast today.

Dr. Palmquist:

My pleasure.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And to our listeners, you should know that I am not getting paid to advocate for any one person or organization on this podcast. I choose people or organizations that I know are doing the good work for dogs and for people all across America, Dr. Richard Palmquist and the Centinela Animal Hospital have the canine condition seal of approval from me.

Dr. Palmquist:

Thank you.

Jacqueline Pinol:

And not that you need it Dr. Palmquist, because you are just the best. Thank you so much for being here today.

Dr. Palmquist:

My absolute pleasure. Thank you guys for what you do.

Jacqueline Pinol:

I would now like to read you a poem written by Dr. Richard Palmquist. It is a prescription for love and for healing left to your own interpretation. So it may give you something you need when you need it.

The universe dances, because we ask. Looking out from darkness, light reaches. And with its shine, a 10,000 standing up, songs birthed before voices. Finding their frequencies, crystallizing purposes, missions, charting courses, all because love looked, love dreamed, and love spoke. Light before eyes, dark before sleep, dark before night. No void, filling everything. A pool that shines, a song seeking ears made for what music comes. Author, Dr. Richard Palmquist.

Thank you for joining me on this very special episode. Please subscribe to our podcast channel and tell a friend. Until next time, hang onto those leashes, The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay.