

Alternative Medicine

WARNING: Alternative medicine should not be interpreted as “home remedies,” should never substitute for a visit to your veterinarian, and should not be used without first consulting your rabbit’s primary veterinarian.

Alternative medicine techniques have been successfully used either in conjunction with traditional medicine or, on occasion, alone. These treatments are often described as holistic because both examination and treatment focus on the patient as a whole rather than being narrowly focused on treatment of a specific symptom. This holistic approach reduces the probability that treatment of one symptom or disease will create a problem in a different part of the body. Because holistic medicine is aimed at restoring a **balance** within the body and stimulating the body to heal itself, it can sometimes succeed when traditional medicine fails. This is particularly true of problems for which the “root cause” cannot be determined. More information on alternative veterinary medicine, including a list of holistic veterinarians by state, is available at <http://www.ahvma.org/>.

The most widely practiced holistic techniques are acupuncture/acupressure, chiropractic, and herbs — all of which have been used on my own rabbits. Other alternative therapies include Homeopathy, Flower Essences, Reiki, TTouch, and massage. I have also included the topic of Animal Communicators in this section, because I have found Murray’s communicator to be an especially valuable “alternative” resource in identifying and treating his medical problems.

If you feel your rabbit may benefit from the holistic treatments described here, discuss the possibility with your primary veterinarian **before** trying them. Doctors (both human and animal) vary in their acceptance of alternative medicine. Even if your veterinarian does not think there is any chance the technique will help, ask if she has any reason to think it will **harm** your bunny or interfere with other treatments. This is especially important with herbs. Remember, just because herbal remedies are “natural”, this is no guarantee that they are totally safe. Also, as herbs are being used more widely, more interactions between herbs and traditional medications are being discovered.



*Murray’s health problems have been helped by a combination of alternative medicine and traditional western medicine. The first time he tooth-purred for me was **during** an acupuncture treatment. (Photo by Randy Kidd, DVM)*