

Chinese Medicine Used to Unlock Digestion problem in Cats



One of my mentors told me that cats are Spleen yang deficient. Most digestion problems in cats, ranging from chronic vomiting to debilitating inflammatory bowel disease, stem from this fact. Even hyperthyroidism which leads to heart problems can be attributed to cats being Spleen yang deficient. I have found this piece of advice to be revolutionary in my ability to help my feline patients. When I support Spleen yang with cats, these digestive problems go away. Let's look at what Spleen yang deficiency looks like and how It can be fixed.

Cats are often heat seekers meaning they like to be warm. They prefer to be under the covers, next to the fire, or on our laps. They often prefer to have their food warmed. Yang is the Chinese medicine version of heat. It is the warming energy of the body. If cats had too much yang, they would be trying to cool off all the time and not heat up. Cats lack heat and are yang deficient.

Now let's look at Spleen deficiency. In Chinese medicine, the spleen and stomach control digestion. The spleen is responsible for the absorption and utilization of nutrients by the body. The stomach's job is the mechanical breakdown of food and the downward movement of ingested food through the digestive tract. The Stomach and Spleen have a special relationship being partners. Cats have sensitive digestion which is the Spleen deficiency. When fed incorrectly, cats vomit, have abdominal pain, constipation and or diarrhea. When the diet is corrected these problems often will correct themselves. It is this Spleen deficiency which leads to problems with incorrect feeding. If the diet is never fixed, then these symptoms progress to severe problems like inflammatory bowel disease, constipation, megacolon, and hyperthyroidism.

Many veterinarians and cat owners believe that it is normal for cats to vomit hairballs and their food occasionally. I believe that this is the symptom that tells you that there is inflammation to the digestive tract. Cats should poop their hairballs out and certainly should not vomit after eating when they are fed correctly and their digestion is working normally. I was looking at the Science Diet website recently. The company was promoting Cat Hairball Awareness Month to help market their hairball prevention diet. I found it disturbing that a "reputable" pet food company thinks that vomiting hairballs or anything else on a regular basis would be considered normal. Let's look at the ingredients this cat food.

Ingredients: Chicken By-Product Meal, Corn Gluten Meal, Brewers Rice, Whole Grain Corn, Animal Fat (preserved mixed tocopherols and citric acid), Powdered Cellulose, Chicken Liver Flavor, Soybean Mill Run, Soybean Oil, Potassium Chloride, Choline Chloride, Calcium Sulfate, Calcium Carbonate, Vitamin E Supplement, Iodized Salt, Natural Flavor, DL-Methionine, vitamins (L-Ascorbyl-2-Polyphosphate (source of vitamin C), Vitamin E Supplement, Niacin, Thiamine Mononitrate, Vitamin A Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Riboflavin, Biotin, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Folic Acid, Vitamin D3 Supplement), Potassium Citrate, Taurine, Fish Oil, minerals (Ferrous Sulfate, Zinc Oxide, Copper Sulfate, Manganous Oxide, Calcium Iodate, Sodium Selenite), preserved with mixed Tocopherols and Citric Acid, L-Arginine, Phosphoric Acid, Beta-Carotene, Rosemary Extract.

I like to look at the first five ingredients when I evaluate ingredient lists. Foods are listed in the order of greatest to least amounts so the top five ingredients give a good understanding of main content. If chicken meal were the first ingredient, this would be ok, because chicken meal is the muscle of chicken made into a concentrate. However chicken by-product meal is not ok. It is the unusable parts of the chicken; the non-muscle and non-organ meat parts. This leaves fat, connective tissue and low nutritional value material. Then we have grain (Gluten Meal, Brewers Rice, Whole Grain Corn) and fat. This food is chicken by-products, grain and fat basically.

Cats are obligate carnivores. They absolutely must live on a meat-based diet. When cats are fed this high grain, non-meat based diet in combination with being Spleen yang deficient (remember that!) there will be a problem. It is this type of diet that creates inflammation and disease in many cats. The good news is that when I see cats showing signs of intestinal distress like vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, or decreased appetite and weight loss, I know that it is because the individual is Spleen yang deficient and eating a poor diet. So, I recommend diet change and a Spleen yang tonic. The formula is called Wei Ling Tang. This Classical Chinese herbal formula has been used to treat many problems in many different species, people included. Meat based and minimally processed looks like this ingredient list taken from a Nature's Variety raw, frozen chicken diet:

Ingredients

Chicken, Raw Ground Chicken Bone, Turkey, Turkey Liver, Turkey Heart, Apples, Carrots, Butternut Squash, Ground Flaxseeds, Montmorillonite Clay, Chicken Eggs, Broccoli, Lettuce, Spinach, Dried Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Parsley, Honey, Salmon Oil, Olive Oil, Blueberries, Alfalfa Sprouts, Persimmons, Duck Eggs, Pheasant Eggs, Quail Eggs, Inulin, Rosemary, Sage, Clove.

Cats are amazing patients. They usually respond quickly and completely to this program of Spleen Support (Wei Ling Tang) and diet change. Inflammatory bowel disease, gastritis, chronic

diarrhea, weight loss, constipation/megacolon all are commonly treated successfully in my practice. It is important to be careful making diet changes with cats. If they stop eating because they do not like a new food, it could become a medical emergency. Please only attempt these type of changes under the supervision of a nutrition-focused veterinarian like myself. Please call us to see if this formula and diet change are right for your cat.