

Pet Notes

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The use of Nutraceuticals in the Management of Liver disease

Nutraceuticals are nutrients with drug-like properties, but are not legally recognized as therapeutic agents. They are administered orally with the intent of improving the health of animal patients. Currently there are hundreds of nutraceuticals available for use in animals including antioxidants, omega-fatty acids, chondroprotectants, and herbs.

The liver is an important organ with many functions such as

- making albumin and clotting factors
- producing, storing, and releasing glucose
- detoxifying compounds and waste products

When the liver is damaged, one or many of these functions may be impaired and may produce liver disease. These are some of the compounds that have evidence of being safe and effective aids in the management of liver disease.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E helps boost the immune system and functions to maintain red blood cells and muscle tissue. Vitamin E is an antioxidant that affects the overall liver health. Vitamin E is relatively safe and inexpensive. The dose for small animals is between 50-400 I.U. per day.

Zinc

Zinc is an essential trace mineral that is involved in many functions of the body such as utilized protein and carbohydrates and making hormones. Zinc supplementation helps support the compromised liver in its immune response. Zinc will also bind copper for those breed predisposed to copper accumulation. The dose of Zinc is 2-3 mg/kg per day.

Milk thistle

Milk thistle supports liver health by blocking the entrance of harmful toxins and then helps remove them from liver cells. The active ingredient in milk thistle is silymarin. The dose may vary from 20-50 mg/kg per day

SAMe

SAMe is a natural compound found in all living organisms and plays an important part in protecting liver cells. SAMe is important for all cells, but particularly important for their role in metabolism. The dose is 20mg/kg per day.

These are a few of the important liver supplements. Many products are available commercially. Please check with us if your animal is having liver problems.