



ANIMAL ANTICS

CATS UNDER STRESS - COMPLEMENTARY REMEDIES

Stress can occur with any deviation from the normal routine, e.g. short, stressful situations such as car journeys, trips to the vet in cat baskets, fireworks, thunder or traumatic experiences or accidents. The signs of stress are easily recognised - sweaty paw prints, panting and rapid breathing, salivation, crying out and excessive moulting. In extreme panic the cat may vomit or mess in the house or cat basket.

Herbal Remedies

Probably the oldest of all medicines. Herbal immune therapy is used to stimulate the immune system to fight disease. Herbalism harnesses the healing powers of the herbs and flowers around us. Indeed, animals in the wild have an uncanny ability to seek out plants to help them when they are ill.

Valerian is well known for its calming and sedative qualities. It is non-addictive and safe to use in treating nervous cats, especially those who become excitable and panic in stressful situations. It is a remedy that can be slow to act and works best if started a few days before a stressful event. **Skullcap** is another herbal sedative that is often combined with Valerian to calm and relieve anxiety and fear without drowsiness. **Hops** have a specific calming, relaxing and toning effect on the nervous system and work well combined with Skullcap and Valerian.

Homeopathic Remedies

German Physician, Dr Samuel Hahnemann, found that a substance of mineral, plant or animal origin that causes adverse symptoms in an individual could cure those same symptoms when given in a minute “energized” homeopathic dose. There are over 3,000 different remedies in use, working on his principle that “*like cures like*”. **Arnica** is one of the best remedies for shock and injury and works on a mental and physical level to help calm the cat and reduce bleeding and bruising. **Aconite** is the principal of fear and sudden fright remedy and can be used when the cat appears restless, frantic and worried. The breathing rate is likely to be rapid and the cat may salivate, for example some cats may react like this on car journeys. Using Aconite before leaving home will help calm your cat. **Gelsemium** is another remedy useful for car journeys and for cats who get very worked up and frightened and want to hide away and be left alone. This cat may well be so fearful he is literally fixed to the spot.

Bach Flower Remedies

Dr Edward Bach developed a process of “*energizing*” the healing potential of energy within flowers and produced 38 different flower essences, each one having a specific effect on mental, emotional and behavioural problems.

Rescue or Recovery Remedy is a combination of five flower remedies specifically used in emergency situations with the aim being to calm and reassure during stressful times, which drain the body’s resources. They include **Star of Bethlehem** (for ill effects and fright associated with trauma), **Rock Rose** (for tremor and panic), **Impatiens** (to reduce anger and tension), **Cherry Plum** (to help maintain control and rational thinking) and **Clematis** (to help reduce the risk of unconsciousness).

Caution: Complementary therapies are *NOT* always a replacement for veterinary care. Although complementary therapies are generally safe, they should be used carefully. Always consult an experienced practitioner before using any remedies to discuss usage and dosage.

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