
AFTER THE DIAGNOSIS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR DOG PARENTS OF CHRONICALLY ILL DOGS

By Chris Huppe, RN, BS and author of
Beyond the Vet; Breaking Free From the System That's Failing Our Dogs



WWW.CHRISHUPPE.COM
TEXT 860-560-6706



I SEE YOU.

You just got the vet's diagnosis. Or maybe it was some time ago and you're still feeling lost. Either way, you're overwhelmed, scared, and you don't know what to do next.

What you **do** know is you want to do the best you can for your dog.

I've walked alongside dog parents in this exact moment. And here's what I know; you don't need to wait days for your questions to be answered. You don't need to sit by the phone hoping for a callback. You don't need to feel lost and alone, not knowing where to turn.

You need someone accessible - someone who can help you move forward through a tough time. Someone to help you find your sea legs and start moving toward a better path, for you and your dog.

That's what I do.

Think of me as your Dog Doula - I'm here to support you, translate the confusing stuff, and show you how to help your dog's body heal from the inside out.

Let's do this together.. you, me and your dog.

Chris

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RIGHT NOW - IMMEDIATE
ACTIONS

04-07

THE FIRST STEPS
TOWARD HEALING

8-12

BEYOND CRISIS MODE -
BUILDING TRUE HEALTH

13-18

DAILY TRACKER

19

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Right Now: Immediate Actions



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FIRST, BREATHE.



Seriously. Take three deep breaths.

Your dog needs you calm and present, not panicked. I know that's easier said than done when you're worried about them, but your energy directly affects your dog's energy and their ability to heal.

This is where you start taking control. Notice the angst, catch the overwhelm before it catches you, and breathe. Your calm isn't just nice to have; it's necessary for your dog's healing, and this is where it all begins. (Use the *Calm* app or any other breathing tool that works for you, but make this non-negotiable.)

BELIEF AND INTENTION ARE POWERFUL TOOLS
WHEN YOU LEARN HOW TO USE THEM.

THEN, DO THESE 4 THINGS:

I. ORGANIZE THE PAPERWORK

Create a simple folder (physical or digital) with:

- Diagnosis paperwork and test results
- Medication instructions
- Vet's contact info and emergency clinic numbers
- Follow-up appointment dates



2. DECODE WHAT THE VET ACTUALLY SAID

You probably walked out of that appointment with your head spinning.

Here are common terms translated:

Chronic = Long-term, manageable (not necessarily a death sentence)

Idiopathic = We don't know the exact cause

Palliative = Focused on comfort and quality of life, not curing

Prognosis = Expected outcome (ask for best case AND realistic case)

Contraindicated = Don't use this (often used to say what not to do with certain medications)



WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS AS THEY COME UP. TEXT THEM TO YOURSELF (YOU'LL FORGET OTHERWISE), TEXT THEM TO ME IF

YOU NEED HELP 860-560-6706.

3. CREATE YOUR COMMAND CENTER

Pick one spot in your home for:

1. All medications and supplements
2. Notebook or journal where you'll keep your feeding schedule and dietary, medication and supplement schedule
3. Daily wellness tracker (page 21 of this guide)
4. Emergency contacts



Make sure a pen or two is handy (attach it if you have to) and maybe a little mint or music or beautiful paper is included so it makes you feel good and signals you to relax and take your time. Little things can make a big difference.

4. DAILY CARE TRACKER

Use the tracker at the end of this guide to monitor your dogs:

- Appetite
- Energy
- Mood
- Bathroom habits
- Pain
- Other important markers for you

DAILY WELLNESS TRACKER (BY THE MONTH)

Use this chart to keep track of your dog's daily presentation. This allows you to keep track of what changes and when. Don't rely on your memory. It will fail you every time.

Some points to remember:
• Use the rating system to see trends and patterns, not for specific details. Use your notebook or journal for the details or longer explanations.
• Don't think too hard on your scores, just what comes to mind, your first thought or impression, and move on.

Use a rating scale of 1-5 (1=terrible to 5=awesome) to score how you feel about your dog in each of the categories each day.
Add additional categories in the blank rows for anything you want to track, for example: nausea/vomiting if that's an issue for your dog.

Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Appetite																														
Energy																														
Mood																														
Bathroom																														
Pain																														

Healing happens **One day at a time. One step at a time.**

Use this tracker daily - it becomes invaluable for spotting patterns and showing you next steps.

And remember - if you need someone to walk beside you through this, I'm here to guide every decision, answer all your questions, and build a healing plan made just for your dog.

Text me at 860-560-6706 or email chas@rehabspoon.com

- Chas

This becomes GOLD when you want to discover patterns or make next-step decisions. Our minds are full. It's a scary time. You won't remember.

The First Steps Toward Healing

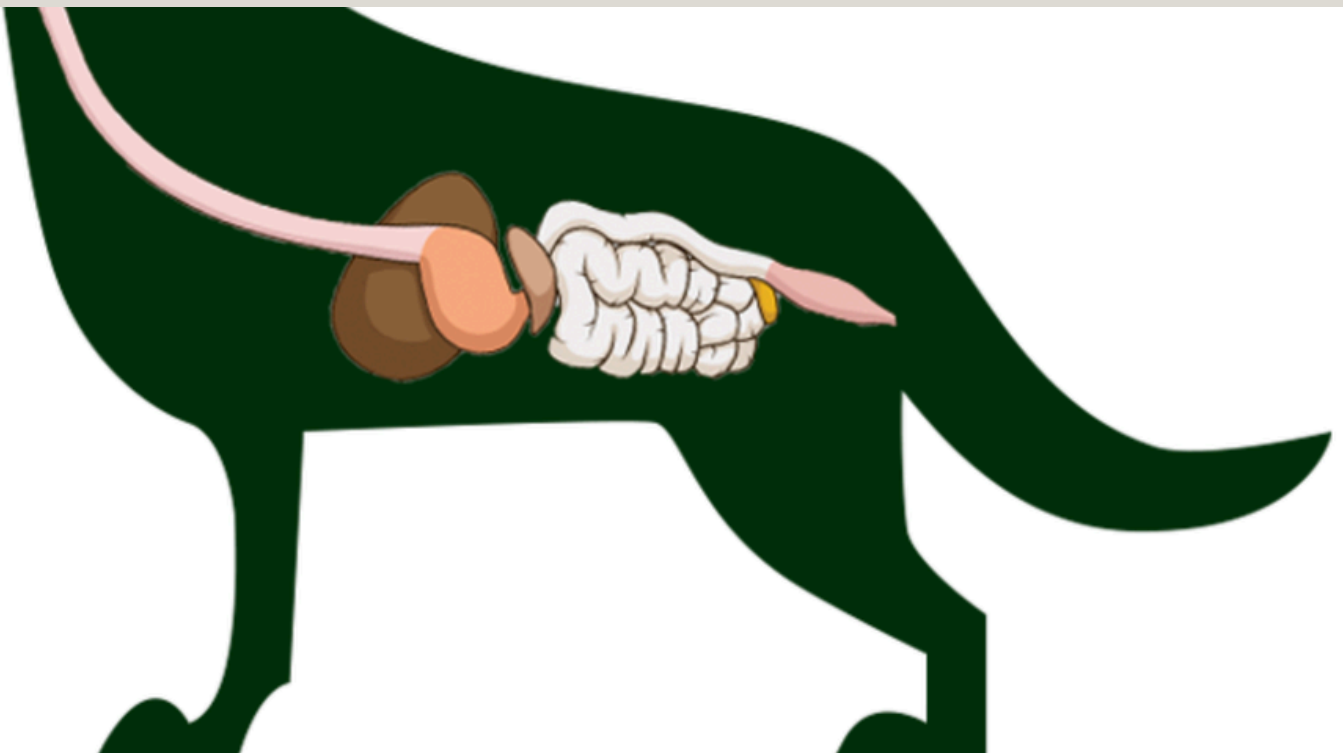


A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Most conventional treatment focuses on managing symptoms with pharmaceuticals. And sometimes that's necessary.

But here's what often gets missed: *your dog's body has an incredible ability to heal when given the right support.*

Instead of just treating symptoms, I'm going to help you set up an internal environment where healing can actually happen.



THE 3 FOUNDATIONS:

Diet, Digestion & Detox
(not necessarily in that order)

#1 DIET FOOD IS MEDICINE

Simple Swaps to Make This Week:

Eliminate processed treats and kibble containing artificial colors or preservatives.

- While it may seem daunting, don't let it overwhelm you. **Focus on progress rather than perfection.** Begin by substituting processed foods with real alternatives, such as fresh, freeze-dried, or soaked dehydrated options. There are numerous choices available, so stay positive and concentrate on making improvements.
- **Incorporate fresh, whole foods, even in small amounts,** as they can be extremely beneficial.
- **Add a variety of veggies or fruits as toppings** on your dog's food or use them as treats. Great options include green beans, zucchini, carrots, and apple.
- **Add water or bone broth to meals** to promote gut healing and hydration. Quality is essential; ensure that the water is clean (avoid city tap water) and that the bone broth is devoid of artificial ingredients. Whenever possible, choose grass-fed options.
- Ask about specific foods that can support your dog's health condition.

These suggestions provided are appropriate for a variety of conditions. If you have specific questions, don't hesitate to reach out. Remember to avoid anything with spices or added seasonings—stick to plain, fresh foods.

#2 DIGESTIVE HEALTH

THE GUT-HEALTH CONNECTION

ABOUT 70% OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM LIVES IN THE GUT.
IF DIGESTION ISN'T WORKING, HEALING CAN'T HAPPEN.

Signs of digestive issues:

- Gas, bloating, or gurgling stomach
- Vomiting, drooling, excessive licking
- Inconsistent stools
- Lack of appetite
- Vomiting or reflux
- Sometimes, bad breath

Quick wins:

- A *quality* probiotic* designed for dogs-*especially* if your dog is on antibiotics (be picky, they are *not* all the same)
- A *quality* PREbiotic* everyday for every dog who's struggling (probiotics seed the gut microflora, prebiotics feed it)
- Smaller, more frequent meals
- Digestive enzymes* if needed -almost always a good thing in the beginning. Your dog's body is busy healing right now, take the load off the digestive system.



*If you need specific recommendations for probiotics, prebiotics or digestive enzymes, reach out. They are not all the same. Text me at 860-560-6706 or email at

chris@chrishuppe.com

#3 DETOXIFICATION REDUCING THE TOXIC LOAD

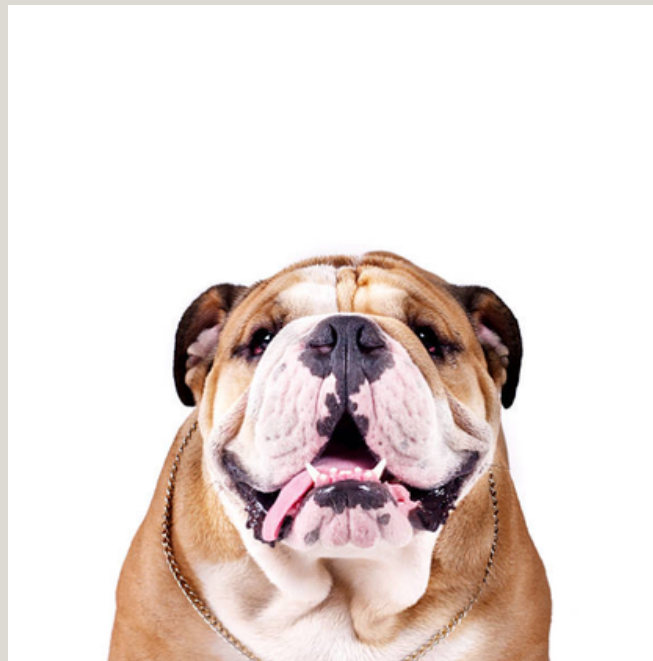
CHRONIC ILLNESS ALMOST ALWAYS INVOLVES THE BODY BEING OVERWHELMED BY TOXINS (FROM ENVIRONMENT, FOOD, MEDICATIONS, OUR 21ST CENTURY DOG LIFESTYLE).

It's important to begin to weed those toxins out as much as possible.

Here are simple, but powerful things you can start with:

- **Filter your dog's water**-especially if you use tap water from a city source or have a water softener installed in your home. (If you *have* to use tap water, let it sit 12 hours before you feed it to let the chlorine gas off).
- **Switch to natural cleaning products** in your home- especially for floors and dog bedding (no dryer sheets!).
- **Remove all chemical flea/tick treatments.**
- **Support liver and kidney function** with appropriate herbs/supplements.

Important: Always check with your vet before adding supplements, especially if giving medications.



Beyond Crisis Mode - Building True Health



NOW WHAT?

The immediate crisis has passed. The scary symptoms are under control. Your vet says "keep doing what you're doing" and schedules a recheck in 3 months.

But you're still giving medications that manage symptoms. You're still watching your dog struggle with low energy, digestive issues, or a diminished quality of life. And deep down, you know this isn't really *healing* - it's just *maintaining*.

You're right.

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

Western veterinary medicine excels at emergency care, diagnostics, and acute crises. But chronic illness? That's where it struggles.

The Western approach focuses on suppressing symptoms and pharmaceutical management - often with side effects that create new problems. This may keep your dog alive, but it doesn't build health.

There's a better way.

Eastern medicine (Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine, Ayurveda, naturopathic approaches) asks a different question:

Not "What's broken and how do we manage it?" but "What does this body need to heal itself?"

It focuses on root causes, prevention, whole-body balance, and minimal side effects using food, herbs, and lifestyle.



But What If You Could Do Both?



The journey all dogs with chronic illness need to take...

Phase 1: Crisis Management (*Western medicine shines here*)

- Follow vet protocols
- Stabilize symptoms
- Use pharmaceuticals if needed to get through the acute phase
- Monitor closely

Phase 2: Building Health (*Eastern/natural approaches shine here*)

- Address root causes
- Support organ systems (liver, kidneys, gut/digestive, immune system)
- Reduce or eliminate medication dependence where possible
- Optimize diet, detox, and digestion
- Build long-term resilience

MOST VETS WILL KEEP YOU IN PHASE 1 FOREVER.

BUT YOU CAN MOVE TO PHASE 2. THAT'S WHERE REAL HEALING HAPPENS. PAGE 15

And That's Where I Can Help



I work with you **daily** to get you
over the hump,
back in control,
and on to building long-term health.

YOU DONT HAVE TO DO IT ALONE



- I walk you through the initial, scary, overwhelming phase, step by step.
- I help you bridge the gap between "crisis management" and "true healing."

We work together to:

- Identify root causes your vet may not be addressing
- Create a natural protocol that works *with* (not against) any necessary medications
- Optimize diet, digestion, and detox for your dog's specific condition
- Monitor progress and adjust as you see improvement
- Reduce dependence on pharmaceuticals where safe and appropriate

Text me at 860-560-6706 or schedule a call [here](#).

YOU HAVE MORE POWER THAN YOU THINK

The vet gave you a diagnosis.

But YOU control:

- What your dog eats every single day
- The environment they live in
- The supplements and support you provide
- How you approach their care philosophy
- How you monitor and respond to the results

And that's where the real healing happens.

A personal note:

I love dogs. Deeply. Completely. The kind of love that makes you understand why we do everything we can for them. And I want nothing more than to see every single one of them happy, healthy, and living their best lives.

Here's what I know... you didn't just get a dog. Your dog chose you.

They chose you to be their voice when they can't speak. Their advocate when decisions need to be made. Their protector when they're vulnerable. Their comfort when they're scared.

And yes, it's a huge responsibility - especially right now, when everything feels heavy and uncertain.

But it's also the greatest privilege.

You're reading this guide because you care. Because you want to do more. Because you refuse to accept "this is just how it is."

That matters more than you know.

So here's to you - the dog parent who asks questions, seeks answers, and never stops fighting for your fur baby.

And here's to your dog - who is so incredibly lucky to have you.

You've got this. And I'm here whenever you need me.

Chris
(and Beatrice)



Text me at 860-560-6706 or schedule a call [here](#).

DAILY WELLNESS TRACKER BY THE MONTH

PRINT THIS PAGE
OUT, ONE FOR
EACH MONTH.

Use this chart to keep track of your dog's daily presentation. This allows you to keep track of what changes and when.

Don't rely on your memory. It will fail you every time.

Some points to remember:

- You don't have to fill in every box, every day. Fill in what you can, when you can.
- Use the rating system to see trends, find patterns, not for specific details-use your notebook or journal for the details or longer explanations.
- Don't think too hard on your scores, put what comes to mind, your first thought or impression, and move on.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use a rating scale of 1-5 (1 terrible to 5 awesome) to score how you feel about your dog in each of the categories each day.

1=terrible, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent/awesome/ completely normal

Add additional categories in the blank rows for anything you want to track, for example: nausea/vomiting if that's an issue for your dog.

Day of Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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~ *Chris*