



# Creature Comfort

## Holistic Veterinary Center

Wishing You and Your Pet Much St. Paddy's Day Luck!

March 1, 2017

### Greetings!

The new year is clipping along, and we are excited to share with you the many cosmetic changes we have planned for the clinic in 2017! Dr Johnson also shares some food for thought - literally - as she explains how to feed the healthiest diet to your pets. Then read about how one pet, a cat named Gus, has thrived following Dr. Johnson's sage diet advice. Also, read about the safest way to donate or dispose of leftover drugs and medical supplies when your ailing pet no longer uses them. In our monthly e-newsletters, we share information about pet care, what's new at Creature Comfort along with our health recommendations and philosophy. Enjoy!

### Pardon Our Dust! A Message from Dr. Jenny Taylor

After opening shop in 2001, I would never have believed it if you told me we would stay at the same tiny physical location for the next 16 years!

It was always my dream to move to a more spacious and comfortable location, but real estate is a fickle mistress and after four very close calls, I finally decided to open my eyes! As I took in the 10-year-old fading paint, outdated peeling linoleum floors and uncomfortable exam room benches, I knew that 2017 would be the year that Creature Comfort received a much needed facelift!



Dr. Jenny with Luna

The majority of the work will happen after business hours, but if there will be any work that creates disrupting noise or stress, we will call you ahead of time to give you the option to reschedule your appointment. Thank you for your patience as we make these improvements, and we hope you enjoy our new features!

### Where's Luna?



*This time Luna, Dr. Jenny's dog, is in the arms of Receptionist Alex Luffing*

### In This Issue

[Pardon Our Dust!](#)

[Why Feed Fresh and Raw Food to Our Pets](#)

[What a Difference a Year, Holistic Pet Care and a Raw Diet Can Make!](#)

[What to Do with Leftover Pet Medications and Sharps](#)

[2017 Beast of the Bay Awards - Vote in March!](#)

### Quick Links

[Visit Our Website](#)



### Noteworthy

**2017 Beast of the Bay Awards**

Starting today, March 1, [baywoof.com](http://baywoof.com) opens

Check back monthly as Dr. Jenny shares the experience with you, our extended family of Creature Comforters!

## Why Feed Fresh and Raw Food to Our Pets

By Dr. Christie Johnson

We all know that the majority of processed foods are bad for people, but did you know that pet kibble and canned food are just as bad for our pets? So what is the best diet for our cats and dogs? It turns out that fresh and raw food - including raw or minimally cooked meat - provides the greatest health benefits for pets.



### **Greatest health is achieved on a diet of minimally processed food.**

- Dry and canned pet foods contain highly processed and refined foods that lack many of the nutrients they once had, such as fiber, vitamins and minerals. Examples of overly refined foods are sugar, syrup, flour, white rice and corn meal as well as shortening, and soybean and canola oils. Fresh and raw diets are minimally processed and have few or no refined foods.
- Heat processing food causes proteins to denature and results in a loss of vitamins and enzymes. Canned food is heated to at least 250°F. Most dry food is heated to 330-400°F. Gently cooked and raw foods are the least heat-altered.

### **Higher quality ingredients.**

- Most commercial kibble uses substandard protein sources, such as chicken meal, animal byproducts and vegetable proteins such as corn and soy. It also uses substandard fat sources.
- Commercially available raw food diets (available frozen at high-end pet stores) use whole meats, organs and bones.
- Preparing food at home allows a selection of high-quality meat and vegetable whole food ingredients for each batch.

### **Species-appropriate.**

category nominations for its annual [Beast of the Bay awards](#). The nominations close April 30, and then actual voting for category winners begins with winners announced in August. We are grateful for the support you've shown us in the past in this contest. Please consider nominating and later voting for us again. Thank you in advance for helping us shine in 2017!

### **Alex Lufting Shifts to Part-Time Schedule**

Our beloved receptionist Alex will be switching from full-time to part-time at Creature Comfort, because she was offered her dream job working at a medical lab. We are lucky that she will continue to work on Saturdays for the time being. Please join us in wishing her well as she expands her horizons!

### **Creature Comforter of the Month: Alex!**



*Alex Lufting*

Help us recognize Alex Lufting, chosen by her peers to be Creature Comforter of the

- Dogs and cats have no nutritional need for carbohydrates and are evolved to use protein and fat as energy sources.
- Dogs and cats possess a short, simple gastrointestinal tract. Because meat is easily digested (relative to plants), their small intestines are short.
- Dogs and cats have short and pointed teeth designed for grasping, ripping and shredding meat (not grinding grains). They do not mix their food with saliva - they simply bite off huge chunks of meat and swallow them.
- Carnivores are not designed to eat starch and grain-filled diets. Dogs' and cats' saliva does not contain the carbohydrate-digesting enzyme amylase. All kibble foods have 30-65% starch and/or grains. These increase the risk of obesity, pancreatic insufficiency, diabetes, arthritis, bladder stones, kidney disease, skin problems and cancer.
- High moisture content in food is beneficial. Dogs and cats have fewer health problems when moisture is in the food they are fed and they hardly need to drink water.
- Most young and robust pets do best on a raw diet. Low-heat cooking does increase some nutrient availability so a gentle simmer, short boil or crock pot preparation is beneficial to some pets (between 180-212°F).

### **Skip the additives.**

- Most kibble contains coloring agents and stabilizers, and all have preservatives.
- Preservatives are not required to be on the pet food label if ingredients are purchased for a recipe having already been processed with preservatives, such as fish meal or chicken.
- Raw foods have enzymes that aid in digesting and absorbing nutrients. Cooking destroys these enzymes.
- Stool is generally smaller, has less odor and is easier to pick up on raw and home-prepared diets.

At Creature Comfort, examples of health abound in the pets who eat fresh and raw foods. They have a shiny coat, healthy skin, increased energy and cleaner teeth. They may also have fewer ear problems, resistance to disease and parasites (such as fleas), and an improvement in organ health and function. Some serious health disorders disappear completely just by switching to fresh and raw food!

Consult with your Creature Comfort veterinarian about the specific combination of foods and possible supplements that will most benefit your pet.

Month! According to Creature Comfort staff, Alex always makes herself available to pitch in, has great taste in music, and remains calm even in the most hectic times. Thank you, Alex!

### **Pets of the Month!**



*Zlata Rusin*



*Omar Atherton*

Congratulations to Zlata Rusin and Omar Atherton, winners of Pet of the Month for March.

Pet of the Month winners receive a \$25 coupon for Creature Comfort, have their photo posted in our lobby, receive a bag of sea jerky (for dogs), sea flex (for cats), or a special treat (for bunnies) and appear in our monthly e-newsletter.

Next time you come into the clinic, ask our receptionists how you

Read about Betsy's cat Gus, who went from a sickly foster kitty to a thriving feline family member upon changing to a healthy raw food diet and holistic supplements.

## What a Difference a Year, Holistic Pet Care and a Raw Diet Can Make!

by Betsy Aaron



*Gus, a year ago as a foster (left) and now (right) following a holistic medicine approach, including a raw diet.*

After seeing a listing on Facebook that Cat Town Cafe was in need of foster homes for some cats, my husband and I agreed to take in a kitty.

On November 22, 2015, Gus arrived at our home. He had been found on the streets and hated being cooped up in a kennel at the shelter. No one knew how long he'd been surviving on his own, but he had not been neutered, did not have a chip, and he came to us with multiple health issues.

He had a skin condition that included patches of missing fur, and areas that were raw, itchy, rough, and red. His fur was very thin. He had a respiratory infection that included a cough that rivaled that of a human with horrible bronchitis, and a nose so stuffed it was impossible for him to breathe through it. His left eye was watery. And he was quite thin.

Cat Town ensured he had a physical exam, got neutered, had a flea treatment, and received treatments and medications for his other conditions before he arrived at our home. And that started the process of our care for him. The doctors who had seen him thought he must have been five or six years old.

Even though he had been a street cat, Gus had no hesitation curling up on our laps and falling asleep. He was clearly grateful to have landed someplace warm and cozy to rest, and get care and food on a regular basis. We kept him confined to one room for the first few weeks, and he felt just fine with that. He had no energy

can enter your pet into our monthly drawing for Pet of the Month!

### Clinic Hours

We are open

**Monday-Friday:**

9 a.m.-6 p.m.

**Saturday:**

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Sunday:**

Closed

If you have an emergency with your pet any time we are closed, please call PETS animal ER in Berkeley at (510) 548-6684.

to be curious and did not seem to miss the outdoors.

His coughing became an enormous concern as the antibiotics we were asked to give him didn't seem to be helping. And one morning we found that what seemed out of nowhere, he developed a fat lip. Cat Town approved a trip to a clinic with a Western medicine focus where Gus had been seen before. They switched him to a different antibiotic and changed his diet to include a food that was beneficial for pets with allergies.

We knew that if Gus improved, there was a good chance we would make him an official part of our family. He had such a gentle and kind demeanor, we were falling for him. On the flip side, if he did not improve, we were not in a position to take on the expenses of a lot of ongoing veterinary care and felt he would need to find a different family or return to Cat Town - both options we knew would crush us. That was a harsh reality, though, even if it was one we didn't want to face.

When a couple of weeks passed and we saw little improvement after the vet visit, Cat Town approved a visit to Creature Comfort. Lucky for us all! Dr. Christie Johnson prescribed herbal pills to boost his immune system, allergy pills to help his itching, fish oils to help his skin and coat, and a raw diet to help give him a clean system and fresh start. She also suspected he was just a year or two old, because although he looked run down and older, he was as playful as a kitten.

With Dr. Johnson's approach, over the next several weeks, gradually Gus's lungs cleared, his cough disappeared, and his energy improved dramatically. He proved himself to have the heart of a young cat, chasing super balls and toy mice constantly and pouncing at every opportunity. He made such impressive high leaps, it took our breath away.

After Gus continued to improve over the next several months, we decided to call him our own. And his improvements just kept showing. Now, just over a year from when we started to foster him, Gus looks like a completely different cat. His fur is thick and silky, he has no trace of a cough or congestion, he has gained weight and filled out, and his eyes showed a strong, playful spirit. And his fat lip disappeared long ago. What a difference a year can make! He has transformed, and we are so happy and proud to have him as a member of our family.

We are grateful to Creature Comfort for finding the things that helped Gus so successfully regain his health. It's been a heartening journey for us all.

## What to Do with Leftover Pet Medications and Sharps

Many of our pets, especially as they age, require extra support with



medications and treatments, some of which are best administered with a needle, such as subcutaneous fluids and insulin. The result, however, may be an accumulation of needles, also known as *sharps*, and leftover medications.

Our clients often ask us what is the safest way to dispose of these medications and sharps, and if Creature Comfort can take them.

To ensure safe disposal, it is best to bring them to one of the multiple locations in Alameda County designated specifically for this purpose. If you are a resident of the county, there is no cost to dispose of them. If you are not a county resident, most other counties have [similar programs](#).

When it comes to sharps, they must be disposed of with the utmost care to ensure there is no injury or risk of transmitting infection. As a result, avoid putting these items in the trash or trying to recycle them.

When dropping off the sharps, you will be asked to show proof that you are a resident of Alameda County, such as your driver's license or a utility bill. You will also be required to bring the sharps in a container made specifically to securely hold sharps, and to follow the instructions on the container. You can get these containers at your local drug store or upon request at Creature Comfort.

To find out the drop-off locations and more details about disposing of sharps, visit [stopwaste.org](http://stopwaste.org), call 1-877-STOPWASTE (786-7927), or send an email through the [stopwaste.org](http://stopwaste.org) website.

Prescription medications that are not a controlled substance can also be disposed of safely and for free at a designated location in Alameda County, according to the [East Bay Municipal Utility District \(EBMUD\) website](#). *Never* dispose of medicine down the sink or by flushing it down the toilet as medicine disposed of this way can harm the local drinking water supply and San Francisco Bay.

To prepare unused medicine for disposal, leave pills in the container you purchased them in and securely seal liquid medications in a plastic bag so it does not leak.

The containers and bags can be dropped off at any of the EBMUD designated locations.

EBMUD provides nine locations throughout the East Bay to dispose of medications, and in Oakland, the EBMUD Administration Building lobby and the Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste locations also accept sharps. For more details, go to the [EBMUD website](#). Some of these locations accept household hazardous waste as well, so you can dispose of all these unwanted items in one visit.

If you have a medication to dispose of that is a controlled substance, only one location in Alameda County will accept it: the Alameda County Sheriff's Eden Township Substation at 15001 Foothill Blvd., San Leandro. You can leave it in the self-service drop box in the lobby there.

If you are not sure if the medication you have is a controlled substance, you can determine that by reviewing a general list [here](#), a specific list [here](#), or asking one of our Creature Comfort staff members.

Sometimes, if you have medication that has expired or you have a medication you wish to donate, Creature Comfort can keep it on hand to give to a client who either financially cannot afford a medication their pet needs or who wants to have their pet try a medication to see how it works before investing in it. It is illegal to resell it.

Feel free to call Creature Comfort Holistic Veterinary Center before disposing of current medication to see if it is something you can possibly return for credit or donate to a client in need.

**Creature Comfort Holistic Veterinary Center**

2501 MacArthur Blvd.

Oakland, CA 94602

(510) 530-1373

[creaturecomfortholistic@gmail.com](mailto:creaturecomfortholistic@gmail.com)

[www.creaturecomfort.com](http://www.creaturecomfort.com)