

Nutritional therapy in the treatment of heart disease in dogs.

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A number of diseases affecting the heart are prevalent in canines. Acquired diseases, those which develop over the course of an animal's lifetime (rather than congenital defects present at birth), have recently been the subject of several studies to determine the efficacy of dietary supplementation on symptom presentation, disease severity, and mortality rates. Specifically, coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), vitamin E (as alpha-tocopherol), L-carnitine, taurine, and fish oil (omega-3 fatty acids) have all been evaluated in the prevention and treatment of many types of heart disease in dogs. Other supplements with preliminary evidence, meriting further investigation, include magnesium, Crataegus, and the B vitamins. Both clinical observation and interventional trials with various breeds have provided clear evidence for the benefit of numerous supplements on canine heart disease. Appropriate levels of certain dietary nutrients have been shown to increase life span, improve life quality, reduce symptoms and physical evidence of disease, and decrease mortality rates in these animals.

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