

Announcer 0:12

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Will Falconer, DVM 0:36

Welcome, everyone. We are on Episode 16 today of the Vital Animal Podcast. And it's my pleasure to welcome my colleague and fellow homeopathic vet, Dr. Marybeth Minter. Welcome, Marybeth.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 0:50

Hi, Will.

Will Falconer, DVM 0:51

Good to have you here.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 0:53

Yeah, thank you. Thank you for having me on.

Will Falconer, DVM 0:55

I invited you here to talk about something that's kind of a bit controversial, only because you've had recent experience with it. But before we talk about vegan food and vegetarian food for these dogs, in case my listeners haven't met you yet, tell us a little bit about your background and your practice, Marybeth.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 1:15

Like both of us, we went to regular vet school, and I graduated from Colorado State in 1987. I did the conventional path for some time and then sort of hit my wall, and I don't know if I really understood it, but I just didn't like what was going on and one thing to another, you know, I changed locations, explored. I started out with going to some holistic—well, acupuncture training first, and then Dr. Pitcairn, Richard Pitcairn's course came up. It was not too far from me. I lived in Wyoming at the time, so I just drove. And so, luckily, that course was in Boulder that year, 2003. And when I went to the course, I felt really like I was home here, and that's where I wanted to go. And then later down the road, I mean, I kind of knew it in my family background, but my grandfather and other male relatives had been homeopathic MDs in Pennsylvania.

Will Falconer, DVM 2:23

Wow!

Marybeth Minter, DVM 2:24

Yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 2:24

Really?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 2:25

Even though I didn't know really anything about their practices, my mother, who didn't

really know much about his practice, but... I ended up eventually with some of his remedies, and his doctor's case, and there was more of a history there. It's really kind of cool. So, once it finally hit me, I was like, "Oh, my god, this is something deeper." And so, I just hope I can carry it forward in a good way and with integrity. So, that was neat. And so then, it just felt like that's what I wanted to really study and focus on. So, one thing to another, I've moved locales, I'm in Arizona now. But anyway, that's where that started.

Will Falconer, DVM 3:09

Beautiful. What an interesting history. Who would have guessed you had a grandfather as a homeopath? And just for our listeners who don't know this, homeopathy was big in the day, it was the primary medicine. We had homeopathic hospitals. Pennsylvania was a hotbed of homeopathy.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 3:25

He went to the Hahnemann medical school in Philadelphia, which is still there, but they don't teach homeopathy.

Will Falconer, DVM 3:34

That's really cool. And I brought you on today because we've both had these reservations over the years, kind of coming up through, how do we feed these animals we're taking care of? Now we're looking at it from a broader perspective, a holistic and especially a homeopathic perspective. And this vegan diet came on the scene some years back, and both of us, probably, I think, I don't want to speak for you too much, but I certainly went, well, wait a minute now. We've got dogs who have evolved from wolves. And they've got these teeth that are made for pulling flesh from bones and cutting flesh in the molars. And cats are obligate carnivores, we call them, and yet people are out there saying, "Well, we've got a vegan diet, and there may be some merit to it." And so, I got you on because you had an experience recently that helped shift your thinking about it and made me much more curious to explore this diet in pretty specific cases. So, would you share a bit about this? We've gotten permission from your client Crystal to share a bit about her story. Would you tell us?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 4:46

Right. Well, my shift, Will, came when Dr. Pitcairn and Susan Pitcairn and others had been working on looking at this, and certainly, then I met other practitioners that had been working with plant-based diets for maybe years, but it wasn't, of course, very well-known. And so, that sort of was a stepping stone for me. I was very interested in it, I approached it mainly very concerned about sustainability of our food supply and also ethical. But also realizing that a lot of how our animal products, our meat, our agriculture is, the predominant amount of our meat comes from factory farms or CAFO animals, caged animal feeding operations. And that hasn't been easy for the guardians of dogs and cats to get really decent meat. And so, that's where I really looked at it and also started to realize that, especially dogs are very malleable in how they can adapt. So, I really, really looked into this. I had been very much on the recommending raw meat diets for a long time. And when I was in Wyoming, there was a store there that really started out with a lot of grain-free, and they brought in the frozen, raw diet. And that was sort of really going on. I later, looking back,

had problems with it. And so, I started to have to really examine this. And then as I kind of evolved in my homeopathic practice, and also being around the chance to kind of go through a lot of this thought process with others, I really started to look at this seriously. And also, I made changes in my own diet for lots of reasons. And along with that, but this also realizing studying about how, yes, as we know, our dogs share at least 99-point point percent of the genetic code, just the evolution of dogs, to understand them, how malleable they've been through the ages, through thousands of years of domestication that have followed people. So, they're really very distant in their sort of phenotypical, or, you know, how they've kind of come along, and it just shows how quickly they can change. I mean, when we look at how the different breeds are, how very different they are from wolves. I mean, really, what about a pug is like a wolf? Even their facial structure is different. So, I just felt like learning about this and seeing that many of the canine species are very much more scavengers. And that cats are kind of another topic, they definitely are very much more obligate carnivorous. But sticking with dogs, I started looking at that and you know, working with my own recently adopted new being, in my life I had gone through also, my really wonderful dog from the past, I looked back at her diet and where I made mistakes, and I felt like a lot of her end times could have been... Anyway, it made me really think about the progression of chronic disease and obstacles to cure, as we know that term in homeopathy, where hygiene or diet is very really important. But I think the thing that really grabbed me was that our animal food supply is really just not healthy. Some of it is, if you can make those selections, and you can have that privilege to have the organically-raised meats and dairy and things like that. But just really, what hit home was more the accumulation of contaminations. We understand the term bioaccumulation, from one level of eating the food, and then a lot in these animals, especially, that are raised this way, it's not a natural food for them to be pushed to produce like this. So, you're getting also all of the chemicals and pesticides and drugs and antibiotics that are going in, it's going in, it's accumulating in the end product, which is the flesh and the bone, and it's accumulating there. So, that was the thing that really made sense to me. And then, there has been testing and things like that to find, especially when it came to fish coming from the sea, the radiation, the heavy metals—that could explain a lot of the problems we're seeing with... Besides all the cats' vaccinations and not having really good, fresh food, they get a lot of fish in their diet. So are lot of the foods now for dogs, they're white fish or they're salmon, but we know that salmon is farm-raised now and they're getting... How they're feeding them and all this. So, it seemed that people could understand that. And that's where that started. So, I'm sorry, I kind of deviated there. You had asked about working with this one patient.

Will Falconer, DVM 9:35

Yeah, that's okay. So, there was an evolution, it sounds like, even before Crystal came along with her dog.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 9:40

Yes, there was. And so, when she did come along, and she was a referral from another one of our really good colleagues and she had been through work with some other of our homeopath colleagues that we know, very good prescriptions for this dog. They were really working classically, doing things. And so, when I met Crystal, she also really felt like somehow the diet, something had to go there. And so, her dog Callie had been, to her best

of her knowledge, she had been trying to feed raw meat and homemade and things like that. She lives in a neat area that she can grow, I mean, she's on some land and she has the ability to have chickens and things like that, that she can control how these animals are raised, but the rest of it was too hard. And so, the diet, the food that the dog was on at that point was mostly chicken, raw chicken, that came from a local, I think it was a packing house, and we kind of traced it back together. And these chickens were coming from CAFOs, caged animal feeding operations, like most chicken is in the United States now. But anyway, so back to that, Callie was really struggling. Crystal tried her best to get her away from vaccines and chemical treatments for ectoparasites. But where she lived, it was very difficult. The dog was very susceptible, struggled with that for a long time. And every time she gave her a chemical, she'd get really sick. So, she was really in a bad spot. And I felt like this Callie was just very...

Will Falconer, DVM 11:18

In what way? What was she sick with?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 11:21

She had very, very severe skin problems. Very, very inflamed. She struggled with itching, hair loss, oozing sores. You know, she had gone through different periods of things. She was underweight, she wasn't eating well, she was very stiff and sore, just like rampant inflammation. And she was also, I just felt like, just toxic from everything that she just couldn't detox or get through. So, that was sort of the change, that hadn't been addressed. So, I said, "Are you willing to make a change, to look at this? This is where I've had success with other patients." I've learned feeding my own dog this way for a few years, and encountering the problems, the obstacles that people usually ask. They think, "Well, how could this be right?" But she was willing to make the change. She started off with, she was making homemade food using Dr. Pitcairn's recipes and others. And that was great. I mean, a lot of the things that we encounter, we want fresh food and homemade is always the best, whether it's raw or a mixture of that. So, she was willing to make that change and I give her credit for her courage for that. And so, on we went, and it took a while.

Will Falconer, DVM 12:39

And let's just get a sense, Marybeth, I often put itchy dogs on a scale of 1 to 10. I don't know if you do this in your practice.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 12:46

Yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 12:47

Ten is like non-stop, they can't sleep, they can't walk out the door and go for a walk without stopping to scratch, and one is normal, they're not paying attention to their skin at all. So, Callie's an 11-year-old Border Collie, for our listeners. And she's living in Texas, I think, right? And where was she on that itch scale when you came to her case after she'd already seen a couple of homeopathic vets before you?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 13:13

Well, it would vary depending on what was, she had other symptoms, too. Like I said, she

wasn't eating the food well. But I'd say her itch was... I mean, you know, it doesn't always sustain that, but she also just had a lot of lesions, open skin. Let's say, I'd put her eight to nine at that time.

Will Falconer, DVM 13:36

Quite high.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 13:38

Yeah. And then, as we progressed later on, we did determine, as she got stronger, plus with prescribing... I mean, I kind of had to do it at the same time.

Will Falconer, DVM 13:50

Sure.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 13:50

So, it was two things. But as her life force got stronger and she could kind of more exteriorize it, and she sort of acted like she felt better and eating better, she did develop that we definitely were dealing with some fleas and some tapeworms. Even though she had been wormed with chemicals, all this stuff, she still had them, so she was really struggling with that susceptibility. Eventually, just as she gained momentum, she ate way better, she gained strength, she was able to force it out.

Will Falconer, DVM 14:24

So, let's talk about the changes. From when you came on the case, you started prescribing homeopathically, and then at a certain point you said, "Let's also change diet." And what did that look like?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 14:35

What we did was, Will, we started pretty much with diet right away.

Will Falconer, DVM 14:41

Okay.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 14:42

She stopped—she had also been on some canned fish. She had some beef. So, she kind of did it gradually. She did kind of maintain feeding some beef for a while, but she took off on a few of the recipes, just started her, just jumped in, got her hands wet, literally, and she was really good in the kitchen. Got to give her a lot of credit.

Will Falconer, DVM 15:04

And these recipes are vegetarian or vegan?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 15:07

Mm hmm. They're in the fourth edition of Dr. Pitcairn's book.

Will Falconer, DVM 15:11

Okay.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 15:12

And, I sort of went through how to work with this, how to do substitutions if you don't have all the things exactly in there. So, she did that and sort of gradually did it. She was still feeding some eggs and dairy. But eventually, she started to see a problem. She wasn't doing that great with dairy. So, we pulled her off of that. But she had also started to gain some weight. It took a while, took some months, because she was really sick. And it was hard. And she went through some times where she'd have some really bad discharges of pus and ears were bad. But probably in two to three months, she... I mean, she was starting to feel better. But just that exterior was just really dramatic. And she was so...

Will Falconer, DVM 16:02

She's the kind of dog who, if she was out for a walk, and a neighbor saw her, they'd be appalled, right, at her appearance?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 16:08

Sure. I mean, the people that did come to visit... And then, she also didn't have much hair, and so, it was dramatic. She had red sores, and it was hard on Crystal to show that. I mean, sure. And she also was, mentally she'd get very grumpy and irritated, understandably. So, that went on. So, we hit probably four or five months and finally some hair, even before that, I think, her hair was starting to come in and there was less of an expression of the sores. But then about that summer, so that was probably four or five months into it, really realized that she was very sensitive to the flea bites, and so we had to do some lemon water sprays, I think we came up for some other things, and then did go through a period where followed the whole kind of protocol to help with the tapeworms, so she would do a fast one day and then do a lot of ground pumpkin seeds and some wheat germ oil. And I think she did some diatomaceous earth here and there. And then sometimes when her skin would get worse, she would all of a sudden then dump a bunch of tapeworms. So, she was getting the parasites out. So, it was quite a process. And then I got to see her, I got to meet Callie and Crystal maybe 10 months later and she was in a lot, lot better space. I mean, she's not cured yet. We're into this over almost two years. But she's made a lot of progress. And we know as homeopaths how difficult these cases can be. We want to pull our hair out with it, because they are so... And it's hard on the client, it's hard on the patient, it's hard on us because they will still itch. And so, finally, she looks like a normal dog.

Will Falconer, DVM 17:57

Wow. Amazing.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 17:58

With some, you know, she has some variations. She's got a hair coat.

Will Falconer, DVM 18:01

Yeah. And the ears settled down?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 18:03

Ears settled down. She feels better. She's less stiff. She's mentally a lot better. She gained weight. She's normal weight.

Will Falconer, DVM 18:10

Oh, beautiful. Beautiful. So, where is she on the itch scale now, after two years of work, you think?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 18:16

Well, recently, I think she still reacts. I know that despite how good Crystal is about watching the fleas, I think she still reacts for a flea bite here and there. But she's probably, and Crystal can write in on this later, I'd say she's probably... She goes through times where she's worse. So, I'd say three. I don't know, three to four. It's still, you know, depending on the season too, and we also did learn too that when she would dump tapeworms, she would get more itchy and grumpy and stuff like that. It's really quite a process to see, like how long an animal can deal with this. But it took some time for her to build that chi or life force that we talk about with homeopathy, as well, and for detox.

Will Falconer, DVM 19:07

So, I think this is illustrative of something that I haven't really covered on the show. And you and I studied it and learned it in homeopathy training, which is, it takes time to cure anything chronic, right? We go into it knowing that and as animal owners come to us, they often want an answer right now, because, "Damn, I've been fighting this itch for five years." So, how long had Callie been dealing with skin issues?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 19:38

I'd have to look right up. But I'd say years.

Will Falconer, DVM 19:41

Yeah, it's been years.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 19:42

I mean, longer than we've been working together. Yeah. And she did have conventional treatment as much as... I mean, Crystal was learning, too. She did what she could because she was desperate. Like all of us are. And I understand. So, I mean, I get why clients get frustrated when sometimes we're at a, you know, hit the wall and we don't... I can see why people want to go back on steroids. But we know that it suppresses their immune system. And that's not the end. But it's hard, a lot of times, and there's still that inflammation. And so, I also felt that her diet helped change and helped calm down that inflammatory potential. And I often see this in other situations of chronic disease as well. It does help. And especially, I mean, I think a lot of it is about them just getting less toxic, you know, with that, and along with the feeding and the recipes, she did choose, the best that she could, organic foods and grains and lentil beans, and whatever the recipes call for, she learned how to really work with it. But she tried her best to have organic, or she was very conscious of that. And we all, you know, now with our food supplies, you can't really tell sometimes, so...

Will Falconer, DVM 20:55

Right.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 20:55

But because of the bioaccumulation, how that works, at least, there's probably less levels of it.

Will Falconer, DVM 21:02

Yes, yes. So, bioaccumulation, let's just give a little definition of that. So, if a cow is eating toxic grain in a CAFO, a concentrated animal feeding operation, how the grain was grown, then how the animal was treated who's eating the grain, and then finally the dog comes along and eats the level of accumulated toxins that is up the food chain. So, we talk about apex predators, right, that's how the eagles got into such trouble when DDT was on the planet. They were eating the animals who ate the smaller animals who ate the grain and got contaminated with DDT and the bald eagles could no longer make an egg anymore because of their accumulation. So, let's go into the diet briefly. You don't have to lay it all out. But I'm understanding that there's commercial vegan food on the market. And then there's Dr. Pitcairn's recipes. And it sounds like Crystal opted to use the recipes.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 22:03

Yes, she did. And then, she also later did delve into some of the commercial, just for convenience. And also, just wanted to maybe go back a bit about that bioaccumulation. Chicken that Callie was on, which was predominantly at the time, as you know, chickens are very confined and they're given lots of pesticides to control...

Will Falconer, DVM 22:27

Oh, they're fed antibiotics.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 22:28

Right, and antibiotics. But they're fed also types of pesticides that have arsenic in them, you know, kind of like the basis of our heartworm meds, the old heartworm, I mean, the treatment for heartworm, like that kind of level. So, I have no doubt that she was probably getting quite a bit of arsenic in her, so that was just a thing that made me think about just how that accumulates, as well.

Will Falconer, DVM 22:53

Uh huh. Let me just interject something here. If you're not on the same page with feeding a vegan diet to a dog or a cat, I understand. I'm on the fence about it myself. But it's important to understand the impetus behind that recommendation from Dr. Pitcairn and others. It is this: that we are often intoxicated by the foods that we are eating and/or feeding our pets, right? So, they're grown in very toxic ways by Big Ag. And unless you find a way around that, the odds of you getting pesticide and herbicide residues and/or glyphosate, a.k.a. Roundup, in your dog's food is fairly high. So, the reason to go to plant-based is to avoid that. Well, there's another way. We at Vital Pet Health, my sister company, have what's called Vital Animal Detox, which is a very gentle but very effective daily detox for, right now, dogs. Cats coming soon. And I can tell you from personal experience that I've taken a human version of this, one day we'll release that after we have the animals covered. And in just a couple weeks have noticed startling changes in my own body, much less stiffness, much more energy, less signs of toxicity through an Ayurvedic procedure that I use every morning. So, it's been very positive and I'm sure it will be for

your animals as well. So, right now you can get the dog version of Vital Animal Detox at vitalpethealth.com. And if you're not on board with changing the diet radically, that is another way to affect the same outcome. Detoxing on a regular basis, keeping the machinery of your animal's physiology working at peak capacity. That's vitalpethealth.com.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 25:07

So, when she started out, yes, she used those recipes, we went over just how to do substitutions if you didn't have the exact—sort of like you swap out a grain for a grain and a legume for a legume—and also to really mash and cook things well, so that the dog can digest them well. And as she got stronger, she did, I mean, she never had any digestive problems, really. Dogs eating plant-based will have, there's more fiber, so they will have more stool a lot of times and that's part of their detox, but I also have to help people with that and say, "No, that's normal." If you're having trouble and they're having diarrhea, we need to dial it back and think about maybe adding some digestive enzymes or how to work with that. So, anyway, so Crystal started with that. And then later on, we kind of looked into, there are some commercial, there are some kibble that I do say that's fine to use. And also, there are some canned available. I don't know if I should say brands on the recording.

Will Falconer, DVM 26:05

Yeah, if you've done the homework and settled on something that you're happy with, I'd like to hear.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 26:10

Right. I mean, I think, because there is more interest in this from the client, and there have been some more start-up companies addressing plant-based and how to do it, because people are seeing the results, and also, they're concerned about the environment, and also the dogs can do well on it. The one that I recommend a lot is v-dog.

Will Falconer, DVM 26:33

Okay.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 26:34

And that one's been around a long time. There's a newer company that started up called Wild Earth.

Will Falconer, DVM 26:40

Okay.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 26:41

People can look those up online. They also make some really nice treats and things. You know, their webpages are nice, there's a lot of information on them. Of course, it'll be more plant-based and those things. As far as the canned, there are a few out there, they've been around for a while. Some of them are, you know, definitely they have some eggs in them and things like that. So, they're vegetarian. One company, PetGuard, makes really nice vegan and vegetarian, but their production has been slowed down for some reason, I can't seem to get it. So, sometimes it's harder. People do have to shop online to get the foods because they may not be in their local pet food store. You know, usually that's not so locally

available.

Will Falconer, DVM 27:25

Understandably. Sure, sure. And I think we should also mention that Callie never went completely vegan, I don't think, right? She had a good source of eggs on her farm.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 27:35

She has eggs. Yeah, right. And there would be times when she did, but she pretty much... And there was also, like any diet, there was ways to supplement correctly. Because you know, even with a meat diet, you have to add in appropriate amounts of calcium, because muscle meat is very low in calcium, you have to get—if you're doing ground bone, you really have to do that correctly. Sometimes it's not very assimilable. So, definitely that was instructed on how to do that.

Will Falconer, DVM 28:02

Uh-huh. Yeah, that's a good point I hadn't even thought of. So, bones, a little bit of inside info I've heard just on the on the fly, is that bones are probably a great accumulator for glyphosate, this Roundup.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 28:15

And heavy metal.

Will Falconer, DVM 28:16

And heavy metal. Right, right. So, what do people do for calcium sources? Are they giving the rock phosphates?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 28:24

I can't recall exactly. The one that's recommended is, I think, calcium carbonate. So, yeah. And there's arguments about that, whether it's appropriate or not, but there are some other calcium supplements out there.

Will Falconer, DVM 28:40

C calcium?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 28:41

C calcium, yeah, you can work with that, like through Animal Apothecary, you probably know that company. That one's been in the recipes for a while as well. The recent one that has been recommended is by Compassion Circle, they make a line of complete, everything's in there. And then how to do it.

Will Falconer, DVM 29:01

Okay. They'll tell you how to make your own calcium, you're saying? Or it's the...

Marybeth Minter, DVM 29:04

Well, the supplement, you order that and everything's complete. So, you don't have to keep doing a lot of doing it yourself, mixing. So, trying to simplify. And that's another thing that's kind of a hard thing for people. It can be overwhelming if it's a time thing or you're not in the kitchen. So, that's why I do try to recommend the commercial, and I think using some

kibble, especially when it's lower on the food chain, the dogs seem to do very well with it and they like it.

Will Falconer, DVM 29:35

Huh. Interesting.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 29:36

So, I don't have that issue with that kind of kibble.

Will Falconer, DVM 29:39

Yeah, yeah. So, very interesting, and just to review, this is a dog who's probably been suffering for a bit more than five years, and probably more like six or eight, I'm guessing. Probably from middle age. Dog's now eleven...

Marybeth Minter, DVM 29:56

Even earlier, probably. She's had some issues, yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 29:58

Yeah, maybe even earlier. Yeah. And likely, like most, triggered by vaccines early in life, I suspect, and we see this over and over again. So, years of struggle, years of homeopathic work with good prescribing, you saw what the colleagues before you did, and they weren't getting good success. It seemed like Callie's case turned around with a combination of yet another set of eyes prescribing, another mind prescribing, but also a switch to a low on the food chain vegetarian diet. And the only real protein source being vegetarian and eggs that Crystal had in her—raising the chickens herself. So, she had some control in that. So, that's very interesting, Marybeth, and it's why I wanted to get you on. I've mentally had a block about vegetarian diets for dogs for years, and especially vegan diets just never made sense to me. And yet, I'm thinking, from what you've told us, that there's a place for this. And that place, may be a preventative for some people, they may choose to do it from an early stage of life. What's your sense of, if somebody came into the world as a vegan themselves and said, "I want to start this puppy out, and never feed any animal products"? What's your sense of that? Is that gonna work?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 31:29

Yeah, I have a few clients like that now. And they're working with it, and a lot of the times, puppies have already come on a commercial food anyway, but they're working on learning how to transition and watch things that maybe needed rest, like when our chronic disease comes up. Course, they're getting probably vaccinated at the same time. So, yeah, they sure can do it. And I think there's also, we all have our belief systems about foods. I mean, I've had to dispel a lot of mine, and I'm still learning. You know, tell you.

Will Falconer, DVM 32:05

Food's one of our biggest attachments, there's no question about it.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 32:07

It sure is and it's a hard one, you know? And I try to be very understanding of people's understanding of it, because that's how we all grew up. You know, how were we raised.

Will Falconer, DVM 32:19

Food choices.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 32:20

Yeah, right. And a lot of times with a kid, you don't have choices, this is what you're going to eat. Right? And then there's certainly understanding, like, this is what you feed a dog. And I understand that, and I guess what helps me and I try to explore that with people, is just to understand that they're very adaptable. They're really omnivores, like we are. I mean, I watch the coyotes that are barking in the background, they'll eat plums that come off my trees, and I have a fig tree and they go eat that and get up in the tree to get them and then, they'll get...

Will Falconer, DVM 32:52

Wow!

Marybeth Minter, DVM 32:52

Yeah. And they'll get the occasional gopher and the meat, and the wild... Unfortunately, the cat that goes down. There's a lot of coyotes here. So, but it's been interesting to watch. And then you look at the scat, and they're eating juniper berries, and manzanita berries, and whatever they can get.

Will Falconer, DVM 33:10

Uh huh.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 33:10

But I think dogs have come along, and they really can change and do very well. I mean, definitely the ones that have some digestive issues, you have to work with that, or they're already damaged that way.

Will Falconer, DVM 33:21

Yeah.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 33:22

Like, any food would be for them.

Will Falconer, DVM 33:24

Yeah, yeah. And we're definitely having some cat people listening. So, what do you think about applying this same logic to cats?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 33:32

Cats are, like we said, they're really more carnivorous. They can very much eat plant-based. I have a few clients that started their cats as very young. But as we all know, when cats get sick or older, and then they have a condition, their appetite isn't very good often, and that's where you run into trouble. A lot of their appetites are affected. They go by smell, they don't have many taste buds. So, they're going by that smell, but there are ways to work with that. And so, what I also tell people, it can be very difficult. I mean, I have to work with them to help them feel better to eat. But they try to first get them away from fish-based foods because I feel like that's the most contaminated. And why are we seeing so much

hyperthyroidism and, you know, there's radiation issues and they're so sensitive with chemicals. I mean, dogs are too, but I think cats almost get hyper with their expressions of chronic disease. And they don't show how sick they really are sometimes, and they develop tumors and...

Will Falconer, DVM 34:42

Right, right.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 34:43

But they're harder to change over because of that. But they can be very much. I have a couple clients that are, they feed their kitty, they're plant-based, they're all plant-based.

Will Falconer, DVM 34:55

100%?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 34:55

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 34:57

And doing well?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 34:58

Yep, they're younger cats, and they started off early.

Will Falconer, DVM 35:02

Uh-huh. Wow. Wow. So, that's yet another stretch for my mind.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 35:07

Yeah. It's a stretch, and you know, they can do better, again, I kind of like to say, lower on the food chain. They can do better eating lower on the food chain.

Will Falconer, DVM 35:15

Yeah, yeah. Interesting. So, do you think a cat, maybe you haven't seen any yet having done this a number of years, X number of years, do you think a cat could go from kittenhood to old age on a vegan diet?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 35:28

I suppose it could be possible. I don't have that experience. I know that there are some in the literature. I don't have any personal experience with that. Yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 35:39

Okay. Good to know. Well, thanks Marybeth, we talked a little bit about reservations and food. We all grew up with eating certain diets, and we have strong feelings about food. This will likely spur conversations in a lot of people's minds. And I particularly wanted to hear about it from you because of your experience with it. And Callie, I think, could typify a number of animals who are stuck with chronic disease and maybe they're getting lots of good homeopathic prescribing, but they're not progressing. It might be a time to consider going lower on the food chain to the point of getting vegan involved or maybe vegan with,

like Crystal did, with some healthy protein that she has control over—in her case, it's raising her own chickens and getting her eggs—as a means to take away that block to getting to cure. So, we've got other episodes for you to listen to if this trips your triggers too much. You'll want to listen to Thomas Sandberg, who's the naturopath, who's seeing great results with animals living to surprisingly old age with nothing but grocery store meats as the basis of their diets. So, we're all on a spectrum, right? We all are trying with the same intent. We want our animals to be healthy. We, as vets, want to help you get your animals healthy. And yet, I think we need to keep an open mind that there is more than one way to do that.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 37:14

Yeah, and you have to look at the patient, think about the situation and... Lots to work with.

Will Falconer, DVM 37:22

Yeah, lots to think about. And the two primary things we'll often work with as homeopathic vets are homeopathic prescribing, and what's this animal eating, right? Because we can't do good work if they're eating junk. And the one that comes up for me, even before diet changes, is we have to stop vaccinating if they've got a history of vaccines and they're likely immune. Right? Would you go along with that?

Marybeth Minter, DVM 37:48

Oh, yeah. I mean, yes, it's such a damaging thing to their immune system and a trigger for their inflammatory problems. I mean, but other things in the environment can be and so can diet.

Will Falconer, DVM 37:59

Yes, yes. All right. Well, we'll wrap up. Thanks very much, Marybeth, we'll have your contact info in the show notes. We'll have any links that you want to send me to help people find the foods that you've mentioned. And I very much applaud your pioneering work and both stepping out of the norms of diet that are so well accepted and being the homeopathic vet that you've been for years. Thanks so much for coming on.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 38:29

Thanks, Will, I just also want to say, too, that I'm not the first one doing this either, but I've learned from the shoulders of others. So...

Will Falconer, DVM 38:37

Sure, sure. And I often think to myself, you know, there's nothing new under the sun, right? So, we're not often the inventors of something. We are learning from others and others have gone before us and shared their successes with us. So, good to be open-minded. Thanks again, Marybeth, we'll talk to you soon.

Marybeth Minter, DVM 38:59

Thanks, Will.