

BowWOW

Facts, observations and musings about Our Best Friends

### **Sprains, strains and squirreling injuries**

Tyler, your rodent warrior, suddenly comes to full consciousness after hours in his personal sun spot and rockets across the yard to where a squirrel was last seen seconds ago. On his return trip to his nap zone you notice he has a slight limp.

Good dog parent that you are you palpate his shoulder, check for foreign bodies between his toes, give him a general pat down. Nothing appears to be broken. He might be suffering a sprain, or as in the case of a squirreling incident, a sports injury.

Some consoling words and an invitation to return to the sun spot, perhaps even a boost onto the couch are good for the bruised dog ego. A dose of arnica is good for the bruised dog muscle. An all-around, all-specie home remedy, arnica is a good natural treatment to have in both your dog first aid kit and in your medicine chest.

Arnica (*arnica montana*) begins as a perennial with bright yellow daisy-like flowers. Centuries ago it was discovered that the crushed flowers applied topically could soothe muscle aches, reduce inflammation, accelerate wound healing and even reduce irritation from insect bites often within minutes. It works quickly to dilate capillaries increasing circulation in the damaged area, accelerating lymph and blood flow. Good stuff in, bad stuff out.

Because of that rapid flow feature, it should never be used to treat open wounds nor used before any surgical procedure. Also you should not apply it if you think there is internal bleeding or inflammation.

Today herbal arnica appears in creams, gels, oils, tinctures and liniments and can be applied to bruises or massaged into strained areas. You can rub it onto dogs, but care has to be taken that it not be licked off before it has a chance to work. There is also the sticky inconvenience of massaging a cream into a hairy dog that may prefer to recover on your white couch.

Arnica is best used with dogs in its homeopathic form. Look for it in health food stores or more esoteric natural grocery emporiums. While it comes in many potencies, for home use look for 30C on the label. It is easy to administer in tiny sweet pills and most dogs will happily play along. For dogs that are skeptical of

the tiny-round-thing texture, pills can be melted into a little warm water and spooned in.

Start with one or two pills (or spoonfuls) in the dog's mouth. Wait 30 minutes and reassess. If there is no change, repeat the dose one more time. For a minor squirreling sprain, two doses should do the trick.

Homeopathic remedies are made from such extremely dilute preparations that only the "energy" of the plant remains. Healing is encouraged on the bioenergetic level by only a few molecules of the plant. Yep, it sounds goofy. But it works. It is almost impossible to overdose as homeopathic preparations are prepared in such dilute concentrations.

Be prudent. If you even remotely suspect a fracture or a crush injury, get that dog to the vet!

BowWOW! Is a production of Tracie Korol and wholeDog.  
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