

# Holistic treatment of cancer - Sheep Sorrel combination

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## Introduction

There are many herbs that can be highly beneficial in the treatment of cancer in humans and animals. I will, however, write here about one well-tried and tested combination, because its use is not individualised to the patient, (like a lot of natural medicine), so it is possible for owners to get their vets to use these easily instead of, or together with, chemotherapy.

Sheep sorrel complex is a combination traditional herbal product originally available from Canada but there are now several brands available on the market from several reputable herbal supply companies, however it can be made up by any herbalist. It was originally introduced to the western world by Rene Caisse, a Canadian nurse who, in the 1920's saw the Native American Indians curing some cases of cancer in their people with it.

She then had amazing results on cases she was treating in the hospitals she worked in, and later opened a centre purely for treating cancer patients with these herbs. Since then more research has been carried out in Europe and the herbs have been used for several decades in several countries for human cancer patients resulting in a large number of case histories of remarkable results, ranging from palliation of pain and symptoms to no trace of disease for the patient's lifespan.

As a vet, I have treated hundreds of animals with end-stage cancer, for which chemotherapy was not possible or not chosen by the owner, and just over 50% of these cases going into remission for several months. Most of the animals showed some improvement with reduction of pain or symptoms within 7 to 10 days.

The advantages of this herbal combination over chemotherapy are no side-effects, a drug free reduction in pain, an increased well-being and activity, and in many cases an increase in lifespan, with costs being very favourable to those of chemotherapy.

The combination contains the following four herbs, originally of American-Indian origin but in use by traditional herbalists in many countries. Various practitioners have used slightly different recipes, and most herbalists can make them up for you easily.

## The Herbs

### Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex Acetosella*)

This herb is a more delicate plant and contains less oxalic acid than the commonly seen roadside and paddock sourgrass. Two known ingredients from the leaf are aloe emodin, shown to have significant anti-leukaemia activity in mice, and rumex acetosella, a polysaccharide shown to display significant anti-tumour activity.

### Burdock Root (*Actium Lappa*)

The common name of this herb is cockle-burr, which is a biennial plant found in North America, Europe and other areas. It is found growing along roads, fences and walls. It has long fleshy roots and is classically a blood purifying and anti-pain herb. Hungarian and Japanese researchers have long known this herb to contain inulin and benzaldehyde which have significant anti-cancer and anti-human immunodeficiency virus activities.

### Turkey or Indian Rhubarb (*Rheum Palmatum*)

This herb is an ornamental form of the common garden rhubarb. Indian rhubarb contains aloe emodin (the anti-tumour component of Sheep Sorrel), also catechin and rhein, which have displayed anti-tumour and anti-viral activity in animal tests.

### Slippery Elm (*Ulmus Fulva*)

Slippery Elm is a commonly used herb made from the inner bark of the Canadian Red elm tree, for soothing the digestive system. It contains a polysaccharide and beta-sitosterol which have both shown anti-tumour activity.

(On-going research with human patients is now being conducted by some eminent oncologists in Austria, and the University of Cologne in three centres in Europe: The Leornadis Clinic in Germany, The Dabling Sanatorium in Vienna, Germany.)

### **Practical considerations**

One form of this herbal combination, which is the most readily absorbed by the gut, can be bought as a bottle of dry powder which retails at approximately \$50. The powder needs to be boiled up twice by the client and stored in a two litre container in the fridge. Direct oral dosage of 5 ml for a cat and up to 60 ml for a large dog are required. Obviously cost can be a factor here with large dogs; it would cost \$100 for the first three weeks for a 35 kg dog at twice daily dosing.

Other brands in dry herb or tablet form are cheaper, and in most cases will give just as good results. I like to at least start off with the boiled powder when quick results are crucial, then the cheaper forms can be used as maintenance.

Ease of dosing can be a problem with a few animals with volume and frequency required, although most animals take the liquid by syringe or lapped it with a bit of soup or vegemite or honey. It is not advisable to give within an hour of eating solid, particularly fat-containing, food.

Most cases I treat receive some other natural therapy eg flower essences for behavioural manifestations (fear of pain on urination in one case), and/or homoeopathics to aid physical symptoms (eg diarrhoea, difficulty breathing etc). Five mushroom extract was used on six animals where lymphatic involvement was suspected. Diet and nutritional support was improved where appropriate. Vitamin C to bowel tolerance was recommended.

I think these other therapies contribute to the improvements shown but the herbs usually appear to be the single most important treatment.

During the course of these cases, it has been very noticeable how these extra few weeks or months of quality time can be very much appreciated by the owner. A healing or resolving of the original shock diagnosis occurs before the animal's death, allowing the passing of the animal to then be a lot more peaceful.

This swift and peaceful death can sometimes be a feature of natural therapies treatment, and is always seen as a great benefit by those involved.

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