

**By Amanda Daniels**  
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RANCHO SANTA FE — Pet owners might spend a lot of money on their dogs, but it doesn't guarantee good health, said Jan Rasmussen of Rancho Santa Fe.

Rasmussen recently wrote a book detailing what she learned about caring for her two Maltese after one was diagnosed with a rare liver disease five years ago.

"Despite that I've had dogs since I was an infant, almost everything I knew about dog care was wrong — not only wrong, horribly wrong," Rasmussen said.

Rasmussen now advocates preventive medicine, natural foods and a holistic approach to dog care.

Tori Rosay, who owns Dexter's Deli, a natural foods pet store in Del Mar, said she likes that Rasmussen's book presents both a standard veterinarian's point of view, as well as a holistic point of view.

For example, some veterinarians advocate anesthesia for cleaning dogs' teeth, but, as with people, it isn't always necessary, Rosay said.

Rasmussen's began her research into dog care after her Maltese male, Jiggy, fell ill with autoimmune hepatitis at around 1 year old. A veterinarian prescribed steroids and while Rasmussen wasn't comfortable giving them to her tiny, 4-pound dog, it helped bring his liver enzyme count closer to a normal level, she said.



DON KOHLBAUER /Union-Tribune  
Helping her own dog through a serious illness led Jan Rasmussen to write a book about dog health care. The book has received a 2006 Benjamin Franklin Award.

Later it became apparent Jiggy would need knee surgery. To boost his weakened immune system before the surgery, Rasmussen sought help from a holistic veterinarian.

She became intrigued by what she learned and decided to research dog care further.

"Sometimes you get dogs that are just fabulous, perfect little beings and these were," she said. "I wanted to give them the best possible life."

Her dogs have changed her life, Rasmussen said.

"I was basically playing golf and now I spend 10 hours a day trying to change the lives of dogs everywhere," she said.

Dr. Rasmussen's book, *Canine Nutrition: A Holistic Approach*, is a self-published book written from the author's experience. She received the 2006 Benjamin Franklin Award for her book. The award helped her gain recognition in the field. She also offers a free e-book. Her clients have longer lives. For more information on Pet Nutrition, visit her website at the Pet Nutrition Institute. For more information, call 800-888-8888.