



# Natural Health Research Institute

Your One-Stop Website for Research on Natural Health and Wellness

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## Animal Assisted Therapy

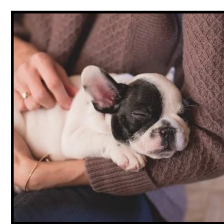
Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is an alternative or complementary therapy that uses dogs or other animals to help people recover from or better cope with health problems such as heart disease, cancer and mental health disorders. AAT has been shown to improve patient's mental, physical, social and emotional functioning.

Animals are successfully used in therapy because they help people relax, minimize stress, and offer a sense of safety and unconditional acceptance. Although dogs and horses are the most common animals used in AAT, dolphins, llamas, rabbits and other animals are often used.

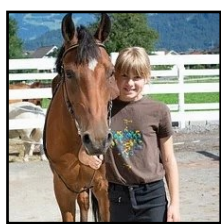
AAT is practiced in a variety of settings from hospitals, nursing homes, treatment programs for children with psychiatric issues to substance abuse programs and more.

Research on animal-assisted therapy found positive outcomes and overall improved emotional well-being in those with autism, behavioral issues, depression, schizophrenia, and addiction. Patients participating in AAT may experience improvements that include:

- Decreased stress levels
- Reduced anger and aggression
- Decreased hostility toward the self and others
- Improved social interactions
- Decreased heart rate and blood pressure
- Rise in release of beta-endorphins
- Improvement in self-esteem, patience and trust
- Sense of empowerment



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[Autistic Children Benefit from Therapeutic Horseback Riding](#)



[Do Household Pet Exposures in Children Reduce the Risk of Later Psychiatric Disorders?](#)



[Animal-Assisted Therapy Supports Stress Reduction in Veterans](#)

## March Health Awareness

### Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month



Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the United States and the second leading cause of death from cancers that affect both men and women. Colorectal cancer affects all racial and ethnic groups and is most common in people ages 50 and older.

The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is to get screened regularly starting at age 50. There are often no signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer – that's why it's so important to get screened.

People over age 50 have the highest risk of colorectal cancer. You may also be at higher risk if you smoke, are African American, or have a family history of colorectal cancer.

Everyone can take these healthy steps to help prevent colorectal cancer:

- Get screened starting at age 50.
- Encourage your family members and friends over age 50 to get screened.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get plenty of physical activity and eat healthy.

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## SUPPLEMENT FACT

A study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that higher levels of vitamin D are linked to lower risk of colon cancer, particularly in women.

From The Council for Responsible Nutrition



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