

# Dr. Ian Billinghurst's Healing Modality to Killing Cancer Includes a Ketogenic Diet

Today I'm interviewing the one and only Dr. Ian Billinghurst, world-renowned author, veterinarian and raw feeding advocate, about his new groundbreaking book and treatment protocol for killing cancer and other degenerative diseases in dogs, cats and humans.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- World-renowned veterinarian, author and the father of raw pet food, Dr. Ian Billinghurst, has written a new book about treating cancer with nutrition
- Dr. B's book, "Pointing the Bone at Cancer," lays out the science behind the use of a ketogenic diet in treating cancer in dogs, cats and humans
- Dr. B has successfully treated dogs with many different cancers, including aggressive lymphomas and mammary tumors, and seen them live years longer, with an excellent quality of life

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I'm very excited today to be interviewing the father of raw pet food, Dr. Ian Billinghurst, or Dr. B, as he is often called. Dr. Billinghurst is a very well-known veterinarian and author who wrote the first books on raw feeding. For that, we are forever indebted to him. Today Dr. B is here to discuss his latest book, "[Pointing the Bone at Cancer](#)." I asked him to talk about what inspired him to write a book about cancer in dogs, cats and humans.

## 'Cancer Is a Problem That Has a Lot to Do With Nutrition'

*"This was a book I most definitely had to write," says Dr. B. "I had no choice. We, as veterinarians and as medical doctors, are losing this war against cancer. This is a war that we've been fighting for hundreds of years, but very specifically, since Richard Nixon began that first battle against cancer in the 1970s, when he initiated all that research. That research, unfortunately, has done very little to defeat cancer."*

*"This whole problem became very personal to me when members of my own family developed cancer," he continued. "I watched them pass away under the current standard of care. I knew this didn't have to be."*

*As a veterinary practitioner for many years, and as someone who advocates raw feeding and evolutionary nutrition, I also watched my own patients who had developed cancer. I watched them become free of cancer. I watched my patients who didn't eat processed food not develop cancer. If they did develop cancer, it happened later in life. I knew this was a problem that had a lot to do with nutrition."*

Dr. Billinghamurst explains that when he began his research on the topic of cancer, he uncovered some disturbing truths, the biggest of which is that we really don't know what we're dealing with. "The way we currently treat cancer using chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which is cruel in the extreme, does not have to be," he says.

*"These are the truths that I've written in 'Pointing the Bone at Cancer,'" he continues. "They're fully detailed. The book is there to show the science behind these truths. This is the important point. There's a lot on the internet explaining about cancer, but what I set out to do was show the science behind it. It turned out to be quite a thick book."*

## **Cancer Is Actually a Metabolic Disease — Not a Genetic Disease**

In his book, Dr. B does an exceptional job explaining in great detail not only the cellular mechanisms, but also the pathophysiology behind how cancer develops in the body. Traditional thinking about cancer holds that it's a genetic disease, and therefore outside our control. However, Dr. B offers a very different premise in his book and I asked him to discuss it.

*"They are two very different theories," Dr. B agrees. "What we currently understand and believe about cancer if we are an oncologist, whether we're veterinary or medical oncologists, is that cancer is a disease where certain carcinogens, whether chemicals, radiation, viruses, or even lifestyle, impact the genome in the cell's nucleus. They cause mutations.*

*It's those mutations that go on to form cancer. That's our current belief. As a result, we're fighting more than 200 different diseases. We're battling specific genes and their protein products. This is a war we're not winning. The reason it's not working is because that's actually not what cancer is.*

*As it turns out, we've known about cancer since the 1930s. Professor Otto Warburg, a brilliant German scientist, discovered this in the 1930s. He published a paper and a seminar in 1955 explaining that cancer is actually a mitochondrial disease. The mitochondria are the organelles in our cells that produce energy. If they don't produce energy, our cells die.*

*Warburg showed that when the mitochondria become impacted by carcinogens — not the nucleus, the mitochondria — their energy becomes compromised. If it happens acutely, the cell simply dies.*

*But if those mitochondria are impacted over a long period of time by chemicals, by radiation, by lifestyle, and they gradually lose their ability to produce energy, the cells start to produce energy in a different way. It's kind of a rescue mechanism. The cells start to produce energy by a process called fermentation."*

## **Cells That Produce Energy Through Fermentation Create Cancer**

*"Now, as it happens, that process of fermentation is the same process that occurs in embryonic stem cells," says Dr. B. "It's an ancient process. When fermentation is turned on in this way, it turns on the same process that happens in early embryonic stem cells of constant reproduction and growth. This is the beginning of cancer.*

*When our mitochondria turn on fermentation, this also turns on, within the cell, within the nucleus, all the reproductive machinery of that cell. And it turns off gene repair programs. This is where all the mutational mayhem that occurs in cancer cells begins. This then promotes the ongoing process of cancer."*

*"This is a long and difficult story," says Dr. B. "It's a complex story. It's one that our oncologists currently either don't know about or don't want to know about, because there's a lot of money tied up in using chemotherapy and radiotherapy. If we can harness what we know about cancer, its true origins, we get a way to defeat it. That way is through nutrition."*

*This is what 'Pointing the Bone at Cancer' is all about — how we can defeat cancer through nutrition. Because once a cancer cell starts, it's using only fermentation for energy. That includes sugar. This is cancer's Achilles' heel. If we can starve it of sugar, it can actually be killed. This is where ketogenic diets come into play."*

## **Carb Content of Processed Pet Food Actually Drives Cancer**

**Epigenetics** experts are bringing all this to light in the human realm. Dominic D'Agostino, Thomas Seyfried and others are focusing on the metabolic aspects of cancer rather than the genetic aspects. Medical oncologists are starting to get onboard, but to my knowledge, Dr. B is the only veterinarian who has researched the topic extensively. I asked him why veterinary oncologists seem to be completely out of the loop, and if he thinks it will take decades before they catch up.

*"I wish I knew the answer to that question," says Dr. B. "We vets are a very conservative profession. We are the most conservative profession I know. We are so tied up in our beliefs about nutrition. Our belief about nutrition is that processed pet food is the only way to feed pets."*

*Isn't it terrible that we have this belief? This is how our profession works. It believes that processed pet food is the only way to feed pets. Yet, processed pet food, based as it is on **carbohydrates**, actually drives cancer."*

*"All our veterinary schools are funded by the major pet food companies," he continues. "Our vets come out fully believing in processed pet food as the only way to feed pets. Now, they don't have any malicious intent in this. All their other training is brilliant."*

*They have no reason to believe, as young impressionable people, that what they've been told about nutrition isn't 100 percent correct. It's so wrong. We have this inbuilt belief in processed pet food, which really does stop us looking outside the square at any other form of nutrition. The idea that cancer could actually be defeated by nutrition is almost anathema to them."*

## **Targeted Nutritional Therapy — TNT — Is Explosive in Treating Cancer**

We have certainly grossly underestimated the metabolic component in cancer. I asked Dr. B for his nutritional recommendations for pets with the disease.

*"This applies to all species, humans, cats, dogs, and others," he answered. "There are three basic components. One, we must feed cats and dogs a diet that is in tune with their genomes — their evolutionary program of nutrition. It's real food. It's whole food. Then we have to tweak it in two very specific ways.*

*By the way, what we have to understand is that cancer is just one of many degenerative diseases and this applies to most of them. But very specifically, in cancer, there are two things we need to do. The first is a ketogenic diet, and the second is calorie restriction. They're the two major components.*

*Interestingly, we've known about calorie restriction for 50 or more years as beneficial for longevity and reducing the ravages of aging. Aging is the process that causes degenerative disease, including cancer.*

*Now, back to the ketogenic diet. Basically, it's a high-fat, exceedingly low- to no-carbohydrate (because carbohydrates feed cancer) diet, with very moderate protein, just enough protein to meet the patient's needs. If we feed excessive protein, the liver simply turns it into sugar, which then feeds the cancer.*

*So it's very important that we keep the protein down. Fat as high as possible. Now, obviously there are some dogs that can't tolerate a high fat diet, for example, those with pancreatitis. But in cases that can tolerate it, the fat should be as high as possible — 80 or even 90 percent.*

*This isn't a diet that's easy to produce at home, but it can be done. It's going to be whole food, raw food, high fat, moderate-protein and low carbohydrate in terms of sugar and starch. Then, we need to reduce the calories. These things really starve cancer. This is what I've discovered over the years.*

*They are based on the science of what cancer actually is. Then we further tweak it with supplements to support mitochondrial health, for example, selenium, vitamins A, B complex, and C — the whole range. The B complex must be activated B complex. There are many phytonutrients that fight specific aspects of cancer's process.*

*Cancer is clearly a genetic disease, but it has a mitochondrial origin that drives the genetics. So a ketogenic diet, calorie restriction, and very careful and targeted supplementation is the key to cancer's defeat. I call this — it's all outlined in the book — 'targeted nutritional therapy' or TNT — it's explosive!"*

*"The title of my new book, 'Pointing the Bone at Cancer,'" Dr. Billingham explains, "is based on an Australian aboriginal tribal practice in which a shaman, or witch doctor, points a bone deemed to have deadly power at some miscreant, some wrongdoer.*

*That wrongdoer, knowing that a powerful and deadly bone has been pointed at him, begins a cognitive process that eventually kills him. He passes away because he knows this deadly bone has been pointed at him. We need our oncologists to begin pointing the 'Bone' of Targeted Nutritional Therapies at cancer. That's what the book is about — it documents the science behind using nutrition to actually defeat cancer."*

## How a Ketogenic Diet Works Against Cancer and Other Diseases

Next, I asked Dr. B to explain how a ketogenic works, and how it differs somewhat from a regular raw food diet for pets.

*"We all produce ketones, whether it's pets or humans, at very low levels, exceedingly low levels," he explains. "We know there are conditions under which ketones are produced. One of those conditions is extreme starvation. Another is very high-fat diets, and a third is prolonged and extreme exercise."*

*Why does the body produce ketones? It produces ketones when there's no sugar available or very little sugar available. Every body cell can use ketones, but not cancer cells. What has to be understood, however, is that it is quite a job to get sugar low enough to starve the cancer, and ketones high enough so the body's cells respond in a healthy way to the ketones, which they can use for energy, but the cancer cannot.*

*For example ... The evolutionary diet of dogs and cats doesn't produce the right level of ketones to fight active disease. The level of ketones needed for the battle is around [0.4] mM to [0.5] mM. As a point of comparison, in ketoacidosis, the level is in the 30s to 50s (mM). Ketone levels at around [0.4] to [0.5] promote health.*

*In fact, we now know that if we put people with brain injuries on a ketogenic diet early enough, we can begin the repair process. It's been known for ages that a ketogenic diet is curative for brain cancer."*

This is absolutely true — glioblastoma and other brain cancers respond remarkably well to a ketogenic diet, as does epilepsy. In fact, the standard of care in human pediatrics for epilepsy is a ketogenic diet. And the good news? KetoPet Sanctuary has seen the beneficial effects of nutritional ketosis begin when glucose drops below 80 mg/dL and ketones rise above 0.3 mm.

Ketogenic diets in veterinary medicine can also be very beneficial for pets with diabetes and seizure disorders. There's a whole myriad of degenerative diseases that can benefit from this diet.

Do dogs in the wild go into ketosis? Undoubtedly so, as there's no guaranteed two meals a day, year round, for wild dogs. In fact, starvation is one of the leading causes of death for many animals that must rely on hunting to survive. Wild dogs naturally have periods of fasting when they aren't successful at a kill.

Carnivores must work hard for their food. As wild dogs age, their hunting skills, speed and agility slow, so they rely on their bodies' built-in mechanism of survival — producing ketones for fuel. It's this ancient metabolic pathway found in all modern dogs that we're able to harness as a powerful weapon against cancer.

## Dogs With Aggressive Lymphoma Treated With a Ketogenic Diet Can Live a Good Life After Remission

I asked Dr. Billingham to talk about some of the results he's seen in practice after putting patients on a ketogenic diet, because I've received criticism from people who believe I'm offering false hope by saying that changing a pet's diet will slow or reverse cancer.

*"I've had dogs with aggressive lymphomas," Dr. B responded, "and we didn't use chemotherapy to treat them. We did use, in the early stages, small amounts of corticosteroids, but that was just an initial step to shrink the size of the lymphomas.*

*We immediately transitioned the dogs to a ketogenic diet. We held the cancer in those dogs at bay for [two, three,] and in some cases, [four] years. They eventually died of something else. Not only that, but their quality of life was absolutely brilliant. I was just blown away by the results.*

*I came to understand that we had the cancer story completely wrong. It isn't initially a genetic disease. It's a metabolic disease based on faulty mitochondria. That's what I've seen from my own experience. Other tumors or sarcomas — a lot of mammary tumors — we treated the same way.*

*Often, they didn't disappear entirely, but they didn't grow. The dogs went on to live for years with the cancer. It became non-aggressive. It didn't spread and the dogs had an excellent quality of life."*

## **'The Science Is There, the Results Are There, This Is NOT a Fairytale'**

*"But let me talk about one other thing. **KetoPet Sanctuary** in your country, they're having wonderful successes by taking terminally ill dogs with metastatic cancer and putting them on a ketogenic diet. They're also using hyperbaric oxygen therapy, as I understand, and reversing cancers.*

*And of course, this is being done in a clinical setting where the clinicians can aggressively institute those diets. It's not just telling people to feed their pets this way. This is the way we have to go, whether it's for humans or veterinary patients. Although it can be done at home, ideally, a clinical setting is the best way and the way most likely to produce long term success.*

*The answer to people who say that this couldn't possibly work is found in the science behind it. Seyfried outlines that science. I've attempted to outline that science in my book in a way that people can understand it. The science is there. The results are there. This is not a fairytale or some fanciful belief.*

*It's based on solid science. We have to adopt it if we're going to defeat this disease. That's why I wrote the book, as a catalyst to start people thinking and understanding all this."*

## **'Pointing the Bone at Cancer' Is an Invaluable Book for Learning the Fundamentals Behind Cancer**

I've had the pleasure of visiting the KetoPet Sanctuary twice. They're doing amazing things with "hopeless" cancer cases, and turning lots of oncologists' heads with their success rate. They're regimented with their protocol. Their calorie restriction is calculated down to the calorie (and they never cheat).

All of the dogs undergo a strict exercise, diet and hyperbaric oxygen regimen, with or without other conventional oncology treatments. That's why I think they're successful; they are implementing several strategies to address this disease. But they haven't published a comprehensive summary of their protocols for veterinarians yet, so many vets

have a lot of unanswered questions.

One of the reasons I wanted to interview Dr. Billinghamurst is that KetoPet has created a tremendous amount of buzz around the topic of nutritional ketosis. And while veterinarians are showing interest, they're more confused than ever because we didn't learn about any of this in vet school.

I believe Dr. B's new book is one of the very best ways to educate them. If you are a veterinarian looking for more information on the science behind nutritional ketosis for pets, please invest in Dr. Billinghamurst's book.

Drs. Thomas Seyfried, Richard Veech and **additional researchers** have compiled a massive amount of information on the subject of nutritional ketosis for humans. A great keto resource for humans was just released called "**The Ketogenic Bible: The Authoritative Guide to Ketosis**," written by Dr. Jacob Wilson and Ryan Lowery, Ph.D. In addition, Dr. Mercola's book, "Fat for Fuel," also discusses how to use nutritional ketosis as a dietary strategy for humans.

*"My wife told me on the 3rd of August 2016, 'Ian, you have to finish this book. You need to get the information out there,'" says Dr. B. "She gave me a deadline. Naturally, being a good husband, I did what I was told and finished the book three months later at the end of October."*

We all owe Dr. B's wife, Ros, a big thank you for her gentle push. I believe the timing is perfect for the release of this book. Human clinical trials have started. The results are impressive. KetoPet is up and running and giving us some really promising insight into clinical trials in dogs.

Dr. Billinghamurst is also a part of Rodney Habib's upcoming documentary on canine cancer, "**The Dog Cancer Series**." "Pointing the Bone at Cancer" is a wonderful tool for people who want to read and understand the science behind a nutritional approach to treating cancer. You can learn more about the book and order a copy at Dr. B's website, **[DrIanBillinghamurst.com](http://DrIanBillinghamurst.com)**.

Many thanks to Dr. B for taking the time to talk with us today. I'm so grateful for the energy and passion he brings to our profession, and especially for his new book, which is a resource for all of us and the pets we love.

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