

Be Right Back! Podcast with Julie Naismith

Episode 010 Transcript – The Ultimate Guide To CBD Oil And Separation Anxiety

<https://julienaismith.com/episode-10/>

Hi everyone, welcome to this special Facebook Live talking all about CBD oil. Now, if you haven't come across this, if you're a separation anxiety owner and you haven't seen the topic of CBD oil being discussed, where have you been anyway?

Hi, I'm Julie Naismith and I help separation anxiety dogs and their owners overcome separation anxiety through my one-to-one coaching and my online programs. And today I want to talk about CBD oil and whether it's the great new hope for separation anxiety treatment. Okay, so I am going to start by putting my hands up to a massive bias alert. I have a bias around anything that's called natural and I am just going to put that out there. That's my bias. Now, when I say called natural, what I mean is I'm biased against things that are marketed as being natural just so that they can hook us. The reason why we are attracted to anything natural, well, we're kind of almost programmed to be. And we've known for over 100 years now that humans have a tendency to make a logical error which we call naturalistic fallacy. Basically fancy term. But what that means is that when something is labeled or described as natural, we just think it's better and it must be good because it's natural.

So, for example, we might say that anything that's organic is going to be better for us because organic must be good. So we have a tendency to say natural is good without regard to whether it might actually be. So that's why I have a slight bias. I'm always concerned that we might be labeling things as natural just so that we can say that they are better than other things. But let me give you an example of what we mean by naturalistic tendency, naturalistic fallacy.

Let's take dogs. So dogs we know, can be poisoned by lots of things which they get into and they shouldn't have. There are lots of nuts, chocolate, lots of things that dogs eat and shouldn't are very natural. So can I say that because chocolate is a fairly natural product, then natural is good, must be good for dogs. No, of course it's not good for dogs. It can kill dogs, it can kill dogs ever so easily. So natural isn't always good. Cyanide is natural, asbestos is natural. Dogs getting into garbage or rubbish and eating rotten food is natural doesn't mean to say that it's good. Salmonella is natural doesn't make it good. Okay? So that is my bias. I've got it out there, I'm admitting to it. The thing about having a bias and I am going to come on to talk about CBD oil, but it's important to recognize our bias. So we've all got biases. We're biased in lots of different ways and we're all going to be we're never going to lose any of our biases, but it's really important to know and recognize when we have them.

So, I come to this debate about CBD oil feeling a little bit prickly because I am worried that we might be promoting something just because it's natural, but not really understanding whether it's quite right for separation anxiety. Anyway, going to move on. I want to get this spot on today because it's such an important topic. So get me, I've done my research, got my bias out of the way. I'm going to try and put

my hackles down around natural and I'm just going to give you the objective perspective based on research. So I've done some research into this and I'm just going to share the research without too much opinion. The reason I wanted to talk about it is because from everything that we see about CBD oil, it may be that this could be something really beneficial for anxiety. So I want to know and I want to understand whether that could be the case and if so, under what circumstances and how can this product help if it is going to be another thing that can add to our separation anxiety toolbox, that is wonderful and I'd love that. I'm really hopeful. The more that we can bring to this battle against separation anxiety, the better. Just want to make sure that we're going into this whole thing of CBD oil with our eyes wide open.

So, the biggest challenge for me at the moment about CBD oil is there isn't enough research. There isn't a ton of research that's been done on humans and there's even less that's been done on dogs. Now it's understandable, we know why. It's because of changes in regulations or prohibition of cannabis has always made it difficult to research. Even in states and legislatures like Canada, where we do now have regulation, we still don't have a ton of research. And in fact, if you ask a vet in Canada, they are no more able to enter into prescribing CBD oil than anywhere else. So that may develop, but right now it's still not something that we have a ton of research on. Again, that always worries me. For those of you who know me, I'm a research geek. I like to base my advice on evidence, on studies, on research, because that's just the best bet we've got. So the research is limited, but there's more and more coming out and like I said, it does look kind of promising. So what we do know about CBD oil and dogs is that the research that's been done seems to suggest that it could be helpful for arthritis and potentially for epilepsy. So promising. Like I said now there's not been any specific research done on separation anxiety or anxiety more broadly on dogs but hopefully that will come. I am optimistic we might get there and if we're starting to see benefits in some areas then who knows, maybe that research will be forthcoming that says this could be a really great product for dogs.

Now, for those of you who have no idea what I'm talking about and really don't know what CBD oil is, the most important thing to remember is that this is very different from cannabis. So CBD is a derivative of cannabis and what's most important about it is it has less than zero 3% it has less than zero 3% of a substance called THC. THC is a substance that causes people to get high. THC is incredibly toxic to dogs. So it's very important that CBD oil doesn't have THC and the max dose, the max concentration is 0.3%. There's an interesting piece of evidence or piece of data coming out of Colorado where of course there's been regulation around cannabis for some time, that dogs are getting into cannabis and they are getting more and more THC poisoning. So don't confuse CBD oil with cannabis THC, keep that away from dogs. So CBD oil is a derivative, it's had the THC taken out of it. So, it's now perfectly safe.

And when I say perfectly safe, that's as far as we know based on the research that we have to date. And how does it help? Well, how do we think it might help and how do we know it helps? Well, researchers are still looking into this but we are pretty sure it works in the same way on humans as it does on dogs. Why? Because dogs and humans have what's called an endocannabinoid system. So that's just the same as humans. That endocannabinoid system, I'm going to say ECS because it's way easier, is a network of cells and receptors in our body that are used to regulate psychological, physiological processes such as

pain, mood, inflammation, stress and other things. So that's how we think it might work because it has an effect on those cells and receptors. Therefore, we're starting to see research into CBD and allergies, anxiety, appetite, arthritis, cancer, seizures, inflammation and so on. We need more of the research, there hasn't enough done but that's kind of how we think it might work and where the research is being focused and going back to that point about is it safe? I'm not going to tell you that CBD is safe because I'm not a vet, I'm not a chemist, I can't tell you those things. What I can tell you is that where it has been tested and where there is evidence and studies it seems to have a very low side effect profile, which is great news.

Now the studies that have been done have been done with owner reporting. That means that obviously we can't ask the dog, although we can carry out studies that are different to just getting an owner to complete a questionnaire. But basically they are owner reported studies for the most part. So do we know that the dogs don't feel icky on it? Not necessarily, but then again, dogs, as we know often when they're not feeling too great, will show that through their behavior. So owners are telling us that when dogs are on CBD oil, they're not seeing a ton of adverse side effects. So that, again, that feels really promising. Is it safe? Also goes back to the amount of research. Now remember that when you buy, people really struggle. I know lots of you struggle with prescription medications for your dog's anxiety. I get that there seems so much stigma around it. That's why it feels like we should go to something more natural. We're still talking about chemical compounds to change your dog's brain, by the way. I mean, when I described to you what CBD does and how it works, that's kind of is that natural? Yes, it is natural, but it's still acting in a fairly significant way on our bodies and on our brains. So prescription medication for anxiety does that of course, too.

The difference for me between CBD oil and between prescription medication is that prescription medication for anxiety has been around for years and dogs have been on it for years. So we are well aware of the side effect profile and the benefits. So we can kind of make that assessment. What I worry about with CBD oil is who wants to go first? And lots of people are happy to do that. Not me, not my dog personally, but I know lots of people are happy to trial CBD on their dog. But coming back to that point of testing and also standardization, let me give you an example of the difference between how prescription medications and in fact anything that's labeled as a medication has to be tested versus something that's labeled as a supplement.

If you go into your local pharmacy and you have a headache and you buy some ibuprofen, the ibuprofen that you buy in that pharmacy, that tablet, that tablet, not the specific one, but that compound in that tablet has been tested. So in order to be able to sell that, the manufacturer of that packet has to prove that that compound has been tested. So whether you're buying ibuprofen or Neurofen or Advil, you know that that has been tested. Not that ibuprofen generally has been tested and then somebody's made their own compound and put it in a packet. That medicine, that headache pill that you are taking has been tested. If you take a supplement, we might have tested the efficacy of the supplement, but there's no guarantee that that brand that you are taking is consistent. And if the testing has been done, there's no consistency necessarily in the testing.

So just be aware that you're talking about very different things, medicated, controlled prescription anxiety medications versus supplements. So if you're the kind of person that wants to know your ibuprofen is your ibuprofen, know the difference between that and buying a supplement which may have been tested by the manufacturer but where there's no regulation around testing, it doesn't necessarily make for consistent products. And that's why I think we get so many questions, certainly in my Facebook group about brands and dose because people seem to have to try lots of different brands at different doses to get any effect. Now having said not my dog, I don't want to be a guinea pig. I might change my mind on that. I'm open, I'm a skeptic. And a skeptic is someone who is open to evidence, believe it or not, not somebody who's blind to evidence when the research is there. I am happy to be convinced and I hope we get good evidence around this product. And you know what, I have a dog who's aging, she's got arthritis, she really struggles. If I find that prescription pain medications aren't working for her or the side effects aren't great, yeah, you know what, I might take a chance because we want to do the best for our dogs and I know that's what everybody's doing when they're resorting to CBD oil.

For me, I'm not quite there yet, but I'm hopeful. Now, having said for the last 20 minutes there's no research you're going to say to me but wait a minute, I've seen my own dog improve, I've seen other dogs improve. I've been in Facebook groups where everybody's talking about CBD oil being making a huge difference to their dogs. Remember that anecdotes do not make data. Anecdotes are really helpful and very powerful, but they are not the same as controlled studies with fantastic research, fantastic analysis going into those studies. So remember, anecdotes research and data, not the same thing. And of course, if you find a product that works, you want to shout from the rooftops. Also remember that quite often some of those people check their profile, might be selling the product too.

All right, have I gone on enough about the reservations I have about it? Not quite, because I've got some more. So I've talked about consistency, lack of research, testing we think so. Another reservation we have, on the one hand we think that the side effect profile could be really low, but it will not be a side effect free product. Why? Because if you change a body's chemistry, whether that's brain chemistry or another part of the body, when you change chemistry there's always a byproduct and byproduct means side effect. If there's no side effect, it ain't working. It's a placebo. So do remember that we can have medication or supplements that have a low side effect profile but it's not necessarily the same thing as none. I've covered the reservation that I have, I've talked to you about, do I want my dog to go first? No, I don't. Does that mean to say that you might not want your dog to go first and be a guinea pig? Maybe that's what you want to do and you'll probably go into it having done your research. I hope so.

Another big concern I have is it goes back to what I was saying early on about this naturalistic fallacy, that if we brand something as natural, if we put the word natural on it, we put a green leaf on it. I get drawn in by that too. I go into the supermarket, the grocery store, and I'm drawn to organic products. I don't always know what that means, but organic's got to be good for me. Or I'm drawn to something that has a picture of nature on the front or like I say, uses green lettering rather than blue. That's got to be natural. Let's be careful that we don't get drawn in by huge marketing arms. Producers of supplements aren't necessarily the little tiny artisan mom and pop outfits that you think they are. CBD

oil manufacturers are being bought up by big tobacco, by the drinks organization. So not necessarily as cute, nice, friendly, and artisan as we might think. So we need to be aware of that. Know that before you buy. Couple of final ones.

At the moment, in most places in the world, and certainly most places where my clients are, vets are limited in what they can do with respect to prescribing CBD oil. So I definitely, if I do go down the route of CBD oil, I want to be having a conversation with my vet. So I will be more comfortable the more that vets are allowed to engage in that conversation. Now, for lots of jurisdictions, vets are allowed to discuss it with you. They're just not allowed to prescribe. And hopefully over time, there'll be even more freedom for vets to get involved in what's clearly an emerging and promising, hopefully, product. But I do worry that we might not be able to have the conversations with vets that we would want to have. Hopefully that will change.

All right, so that's where I am. Headline is I think it's promising. Let's do some more research and hopefully it will be something that can really be added to the toolbox of separation anxiety and make a big difference. If you do want to go down this route, do I have a recommendation for you? No, I don't have a brand that I can share with you, but I do have some tips for you if it is something you're thinking about. First off, do speak to your vet. Like I said, they might be restricted in what they can say. But you do need to ask your vet. You need to ask your vet because you want to know about interactions, maybe not today, but in a year's time when your dog comes in for something else. Your vet prescribes something you forgot to tell them. They're on CBD oil and you have an issue with an interaction. So do speak to your vet, do your research on brands. Find a brand that's reputable, that's been tested that you're happy with the testing of and make sure that you're comfortable with the brand you're using. So, like I said, I don't have a recommendation, but if it were me, I'd do tons of research around the brand. And my other tip is, let's not see this as some magic wand or some miracle cure at best.

My view in my take, based on what we're seeing emerging, is that it's going to be something that will help, but not cure separation anxiety, just as medication, prescription medication, doesn't cure separation anxiety. So let's not get our hopes up that CBD oil is going to be the fix it will make. More than likely, it will make a difference to some dogs, maybe lots of dogs, but it's unlikely to be the cure that we're looking for. Another tip, really important one, if you do go down this route, as with any supplement, as with any medication, anything that's changing a dog's brain chemistry, monitor your dog for side effects, see how they get on with it. All right, so summary, and then I'm going to take questions. For me, this could be something really, really positive for the future. But I'm in wait and see mode. And as the research comes out, I will share it with you. I'll share it with my group. And I'm just optimistic that we will get the information and the evidence that we need to be able to say, yeah, this is good.

So that's me, and I'm going to take your questions now. That's my thoughts on it, but let me hear what you have to say. Yeah. So people are saying the same thing. We're not anti this. It's just the lack of research that makes us hesitant. Gail says, and Joe says that it's partly because of the lack of research that gives me pause. Yeah, that's kind of me. Like I say, if I find out tomorrow that Gabapentin isn't helping India or Metacam is upsetting her, Tommy, I might be more tempted. But right now, I don't

want to be testing it out on her. gabapentin's been around for 20 years and we kind of know how it works, so I'd rather give her that than something that I'm not sure about. And Gail, you make a really good point. Gail. Gail says, everybody that sells it claims that they have the best. I wouldn't chance it with my dog. So that's where I was coming from when I'm saying, is it ibuprofen, is it neurofen, is it advil? I want that. I want to be able to go and buy CBD oil and know it's this dosage and it's been tested for the amount of THC and so on, and that it's the same wherever I buy it from. Doesn't matter which brand I get, I know what I am getting and that's what I want to know. So that's a great comment from Gail and Laura. Laura Jean, you have had great success on CBD Oil and I love hearing about how that's helped for Sebastian, isn't it? I think you put it on. So don't stop those stories coming because it's really helpful to know when it does work and if you stop using it, do the side effects go away? I'm going to guess I don't know because I'm not a vet and I don't know about chemistry.

What we see in dogs and people when you take something that's got side effects, typically, but it depends on the medication, doesn't it? Typically the side effects go away, but do they always? I really am at my depth on that one. Yeah. So gosh, that sounded like I was being incredibly negative. I'm just a skeptic. Skeptic means give me the evidence and I'll buy into it and I'll change my mind in a flash. But I do need the evidence. If anybody's got any questions and you're watching the replay, feel free to dive into the comments and I will answer them when I pick up the comments afterwards. Because I know sometimes you're watching the replay, you've got a question and you don't get it answered. All right, thank you, everyone for joining that. I hope that helped. Love to know your thoughts as you're watching the replay and as I said, do keep sharing any successes, any insights you've got because it's really interesting for us all to find out. Laurie Jean says, no. No, you're allowed to believe what you believe. Yes, I'm also I am yeah, I can get pretty stuck in my I can dig my heels in about stuff, but I can also be persuaded if somebody puts good research in front of me and I really like that. I'd like having my eyes open by research.

All right, thank you, everyone. I'm going to end the live there and I'll see you online again soon. Thank you for tuning in this week and I hope you'll join me next week. Bye for now.