

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is one of a variety of therapies that your veterinarian may use to treat your animal. Most simply stated, acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body which have the neuroanatomical communication to alter various biochemical and physiological conditions in order to achieve a desired effect. Acupuncture has been used for thousands of years in animals and humans. It was developed by observing the effects of needles placed at specific points on the body. These ancient practitioners explained their observations through social and political theories of their day, but we know that the effects are best explained by the relationship of nerves to the surrounding anatomy. Acupuncture is now being utilized by an increasing number of veterinarians for many conditions. It is not a panacea, a cure-all, but where indicated it works well and can improve the quality of life for our animals.

Medical acupuncture is defined as: An evidence-based approach to acupuncture built on contemporary anatomy, physiology and pathology. Medical acupuncture replaces the anachronistic metaphors of Yin, Yang, and Qi with a more nuanced and accurate understanding of physiologic dysfunction. This opens the door to designing acupuncture treatments as restorative neurophysiologic interventions that have a proper place in modern healthcare.

Acupuncture Uses

Small Animal

- Musculoskeletal problems
- Hip dysplasia
- Arthritis
- Intervertebral disc disease
- Long term injuries
- Skin Problems
- Lick granulomas
- Sensory neurodermatitis
- Traumatic nerve injury
- Certain types of paralysis
- Respiratory problems
- Feline asthma

- Chronic sinusitis

Horses

- Musculoskeletal problems
- Back pain
- Navicular disease
- Laminitis
- Tendonitis
- Chronic lameness
- Traumatic nerve injury
- Respiratory problems, heaves, bleeders
- Fertility problems

Frequently asked questions:

Q: WHAT CONDITIONS RESPOND TO ACUPUNCTURE?

A: Acupuncture bridges the gap between medicine and surgery. In the western world it is used primarily when medications are not working, or may not be contraindicated because of possible side effects, or when surgery is not feasible.

Q: HOW DOES IT WORK?

A: Acupuncture is now known to effect all major physiological systems. It works primarily through the central nervous system affecting the musculoskeletal, hormonal, and cardiovascular systems. Acupuncture does more than just relieve pain. How it works depends on the condition being treated and the points chosen. Acupuncture increases circulation, causes the release of many neurotransmitters and neurohormones, some of which are endorphins, the “natural pain killers” of the body, stimulates the immune system, relieves muscle spasms, and stimulates nerve functions and numerous other benefits.

Q: IS IT PAINFUL? HOW WILL MY ANIMAL REACT?

A: Acupuncture is performed with single use, sterile needles. There is occasionally a brief moment of sensitivity as the needle penetrates the skin in certain sensitive areas. Once the needles are in place, most animals relax and often fall asleep during treatment.

Q: IS IT SAFE?

A: Acupuncture is one of the safest therapies utilized when practiced by a trained acupuncturist. Side effects are rare. Occasionally an animal’s condition may temporarily worsen before improving. Because acupuncture uses the bodies own systems to heal itself and no chemicals are administered, complications rarely, if ever, develop.

Q: HOW OFTEN AND HOW LONG DOES ONE TREAT?

A: Treatments vary with the animal and condition being treated. The treatment can be very brief or last up to 20-30 minutes. For some conditions the needles are stimulated with electrical current or vitamin B12 is injected into the acupuncture point (aquapuncture) or the needles are used alone. In general, patients are treated weekly for 3-4 weeks with a positive response typically noted by the third or fourth treatment, sometimes earlier. Occasionally, acupuncture treatments are continued at intervals to maintain the effect.