

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body by any of the following methods: the insertion of fine, solid needles; the application of heat (moxibustion); electrical stimulation; injection or implantation of various substances; or laser light therapy. The stimulation of these points has the capability of changing various conditions within the animal's body in order to promote healing. Disease is viewed as an imbalance of energy and acupuncture provides the means to balance this energy so that the body can heal itself.

How Does Acupuncture Work?

Each animal is born with a certain amount of Jing or Vital Essence. Jing is spent to keep the animal alive. Vital Energy or Qi (pronounced chee) moves through the body in a system of channels called Meridians and this Qi is essential for the support of Jing. Diseases and problems occur when the flow of Qi is blocked or disrupted. A Veterinary Acupuncturist can affect the flow and quality of Qi in the animal's body by stimulation of particular points on the surface of the animal's skin where the Meridians are close. The Meridians connect everything in the animal's body and each one is associated with one or more of the body's organs. The stimulation of the points on particular Meridians starts a chain reaction that begins on a cellular level and then spreads throughout the body

via the Nervous System, but also includes other physiological mechanisms such as hormonal messengers and humoral (blood, phlegm, and other fluids) flow. In terms of Western thought, the closest analogy is to consider acupuncture as a form of applied neurophysiology.

What Types of Problems Does Acupuncture Treat?

Veterinary Acupuncture has been used to treat animals for almost 4000 years and the principles and techniques, which were first developed by the Chinese, have been practiced for 12,000 years. The fact that these same principles and techniques are still used gives testimony to the effectiveness of acupuncture. Today's Veterinary Acupuncturist may use acupuncture alone or in conjunction with modern or Western medicine depending upon the problem your animal has and the condition of your animal. Acupuncture can treat a variety of ailments including, but not limited to: Dermatological problems such as allergic dermatitis, chronic skin disease, and lick granulomas; Gastrointestinal Disorders such as colitis, enteritis, gastritis, megacolon, rectal prolapse and vomiting; Musculoskeletal Disorders such as chronic degenerative joint disease, disc disease, hip dysplasia, muscle spasms and tendonitis; Neurological Disorders such as epilepsy, chronic pain, deafness, and pinched nerves; Respiratory problems such as asthma, chronic cough and rhinitis; and

Urinary problems such as cystitis and incontinence. Generally, most conditions can be helped with the addition of acupuncture to the treatment regime.

Duration of Treatment

The number of treatments depends upon the condition being treated and the duration of the condition prior to treatment. Generally, one to eight treatments are needed to determine if a condition can be improved with acupuncture. Usually, improvement can be noted by the third treatment, but some conditions respond remarkably to one session. Some conditions will continue to need treatment as frequently as once a month to once or twice a year.

Veterinary Certification in Acupuncture

To become a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (CVA), a person has to be a licensed veterinarian and has had training in veterinary acupuncture from a course approved by the Veterinary Acupuncture Society. The 120-hour course is usually given over four sessions of five days each. Following completion of the course, a person must complete a 40-hour internship with a Certified veterinary Acupuncturist, write a case report suitable for publication and pass a practical and a written test administered by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society.