

How long do acupuncture treatments last and how often are they given.

The length and frequency of acupuncture treatments depends on the condition of the patient and the method of stimulation that is used by the veterinary acupuncturist. Stimulation of an individual acupuncture point may take as little as 10 seconds or as much as 30 minutes. A simple acute problem, such as a sprain, may require only one treatment, whereas more severe or chronic ailments may need several or several dozen treatments.

When multiple treatments are necessary, they usually begin intensively and are tapered to maximum efficiency. Patients often start with 1-3 treatments per week for 4-5 weeks. A positive response is usually seen after the first to third treatment. Once a maximum positive response is achieved (usually after 4-8 treatments), treatments are tapered off so that the greatest amount of symptom free time elapses between them. Many animals with chronic conditions can taper off to 2-4 treatments per year.

Animals undergoing athletic training can benefit from acupuncture as often as twice a week to once a month. The frequency depends on the intensity of the training and the condition of the athlete.



The Colony Animal Clinic's hospital director, Dr. Sharon Wild, graduated from Louisiana State University, School of Veterinary Medicine in 1981. Dr. Wild has been associated with the clinic since 1994. Dr. Wild offers an alternative to conventional veterinary medicine with Traditional Chinese Medicine (Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine).



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Veterinary Acupuncture



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Veterinary Acupuncture

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture may be defined as the insertion of needles into specific points on the body to cause a desired healing effect. This technique has been used in veterinary practice in China for at least 3000 years to treat many ailments. The Chinese also use acupuncture as preventative medicine against such problems as founder and colic in horses. Acupuncture is used all over the world, either by itself or in conjunction with Western medicine, to treat a wide variety of maladies in every species of domestic animal and in exotic animals. Modern veterinary acupuncturists use solid needles, hypodermic needles, bleeding

needles, electricity, heat, massage and low power lasers to stimulate acupuncture points. Acupuncture is not a cure-all, but can work very well when it is indicated.



For which conditions is acupuncture indicated?

Acupuncture is indicated mainly for functional problems such as those that involve paralysis, noninfectious inflammation (such as allergies), and pain. For small animals, the following are some of the general conditions which may be treated with acupuncture:

- Musculoskeletal problems, such as arthritis or vertebral disc pathology
- Skin problems, such as lick granuloma
- Respiratory problems, such as feline asthma
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as diarrhea
- Selected reproductive problems

For large animals, acupuncture is again commonly used for functional problems. Some of the general conditions where it might be applied are:

- Musculoskeletal problems, such as sore backs or downer cow syndrome
- Nervous system problems, such as facial nerve paralysis
- Skin problems, such as allergic dermatitis
- Respiratory problems, such as heaves and "Bleeders"
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as non-surgical colic
- Selected reproductive disorders



In addition, regular acupuncture treatments can treat minor sports injuries as they occur and help to keep muscles and tendons resistant to injury. World class professional and amateur athletes often use acupuncture as a routine part of their training. If your animals are involved in any athletic endeavor, such as racing, jumping, or showing acupuncture can help keep them in top physical condition.



Is acupuncture safe for animals?

Acupuncture is one of the safest forms of medical treatment for animals when it is administered by a properly trained veterinarian. Side effects of acupuncture

are rare, but they do exist. An animal's condition may seem worse for up to 48 hours after a treatment. Other animals may become sleepy or lethargic for 24 hours after acupuncture. These effects are an indication that some physiological changes are developing and they are most often followed by an improvement in the animal's condition.



Is acupuncture painful?

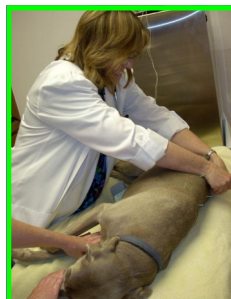
For small animals, the insertion of the acupuncture needles is virtually painless. The larger needles necessary for large animals may cause some pain as the needle passes through the skin. In all animals, once the needles are in place, there should be no pain. Most animals become very relaxed and may even become sleepy.

Nevertheless, acupuncture treatment may cause some sensation, presumed to be those such as tingles, cramps or numbness which can occur in humans and which may be uncomfortable to some animals.



How does acupuncture work?

According to ancient Chinese medical philosophy, disease is the result of an imbalance of energy in the body. Acupuncture is believed to balance this energy and, thereby, assist the body to heal disease.



In Western terms, acupuncture can assist the body to heal itself by affecting certain physiological charges. For example, acupuncture can stimulate nerves, increase blood circulation, relieve muscle spasm, and cause the release of hormones, such as endorphins (one of the body's pain control chemicals) and

cortisol (a natural steroid). Although many of acupuncture's physiological effects have been studied, many more are still unknown. Further research must be done to discover all of acupuncture's effects and its proper uses in veterinary medicine.