

Acupuncture

Acupuncture can be a helpful treatment modality for several types of commonly encountered problems in pets. It involves using very fine needles placed into the skin at specific acupuncture points or within muscles if treating myofascial trigger points. Research is continuing to fully clarify the mechanisms of how acupuncture works but it is thought to influence blood flow, modulate the nervous system, and cause the release of chemicals called cytokines in the body that cause relaxation, provide pain relief, and reduce inflammation. Electrical stimulation can be attached to needles to further potentiate the effects.

Patients with fever, very low white blood cell counts, or severe systemic infection should avoid acupuncture until these issues are resolved. Electrical stimulation should be avoided with a history of seizures or arrhythmia.

Most patients find acupuncture to be relaxing and enjoy their sessions. These sessions typically last 30 minutes. Acupuncture is started once or twice weekly for a few weeks then reduced in frequency over time, depending on the reason for acupuncture. It can also be used long term for a variety of health conditions.

Consider acupuncture for:

- **Musculoskeletal conditions**
 - Osteoarthritis
 - Cranial cruciate ligament rupture
 - Patellar luxation
 - Fractures
 - Spinal pain / feline hyperesthesia syndrome
- **Neurologic conditions**
 - Intervertebral disc disease
 - Fibrocartilagenous embolism
 - Cervical spondylomyelopathy or Wobbler's dz
 - Brachial plexus injury or other peripheral nerve injury such as sciatic neuropraxia
 - Brain injury or neoplasia
 - Seizures
 - Urinary or fecal incontinence
- **Other painful or inflammatory conditions**
 - Gastroenteritis, pancreatitis, etc
 - Cystitis
 - Wounds or acute traumatic injury**
 - Dermatitis, allergies
- **To improve appetite or for anti-nausea/gastrointestinal support**
- **Adjunct to Cancer treatment - nausea/appetite support, pain management, immune support, palliative care/well being**