

## Evaluation and Treatment

Traditional Chinese medicine views each animal as a unique energetic being – not a catalog of symptoms and signs. The health of an animal is considered a landscape, with good health being a beautiful and harmonious landscape and poor health being an ugly and disrupted landscape.

Before therapy can begin, a Chinese diagnosis is made. This is accomplished through a systematic process of evaluating a patient by observing, touching, listening, and inquiring. The resulting Chinese diagnosis is the basis for planning or prescribing therapy. A simple acupuncture point or group of points is selected to correct an animal's specific energetic excesses or deficiencies. The acupuncture needle acts like an opener and closer of doors or gates – like a lock on a waterway. The needle summons or permits (pushes or pulls) energy from one pathway to another. Through this process it is the intention of acupuncture to correct energetic disturbances and allow the body to govern and regulate itself in a normal manner. The animal, in effect, heals itself, not through palliation or suppression, but by correcting what is fundamentally wrong.

Once the acupuncture prescription or group of points is chosen, therapy can begin. There are many ways to stimulate or depress acupuncture points, including sterile needles, pressure, laser light, injection of solutions, low voltage electricity or implantation of gold or silver beads. The most commonly used technique being the use of very thin, sterile, solid Chinese needles.

## How Many treatments are needed?

It depends on the nature, severity and duration of the condition. Each animal is unique and will heal at different rates and tolerate the therapy differently. Treatments can last from 2 to 30 minutes. While a single session may resolve an acute condition, chronic conditions may need 3 to 10 treatments for resolution. Some degenerative conditions may need maintenance treatments over time.

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# Understanding Veterinary Acupuncture



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### Acupuncture can be used to treat;

- ✓ **Musculoskeletal problems**  
Arthritis, hip dysplasia, disk problems, geriatric weakness
- ✓ **Neurologic problems**  
Nerve paralysis, seizures
- ✓ **Gastrointestinal disorders**  
Inflammatory bowel disease, chronic constipation, vomiting, diarrhea
- ✓ **Respiratory problems**  
Asthma, chronic upper respiratory infection
- ✓ **Other chronic conditions**  
Renal insufficiency, oral inflammation, LUTD, hyperthyroidism, behavioral problems, skin problems

## What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body which have the ability to alter various biochemical and physiological conditions to achieve the desired effect. It is a means of helping the body heal itself.

Acupuncture has been used for nearly 4,000 years on animals and humans. It is recognized throughout the world as a safe and effective form of medicine which requires extensive training for its proper use. It is not a magic potion but where it is indicated it works well.

## How Acupuncture Works

Acupuncture is now known to affect all major physiological systems. It works primarily through the central nervous system affecting the musculoskeletal, hormonal and cardiovascular systems. It does more than relieve pain. How it works depends on what condition one is treating and which points are utilized. Acupuncture increases circulation, causes release of many neurotransmitters and neurohormones; some of which are endorphins, the bodies "natural pain-killing" hormones, relieves muscle spasms, stimulates nerves, stimulates the bodies defense systems, as well as numerous other beneficial effects.

According to Chinese philosophy disease is an imbalance of energy or Qi (chee), Yin, or Yang in the body. Acupuncture therapy is based on balancing the energy between Yin and Yang, correcting the flow of energy and thereby healing the animal.

## Is Acupuncture Safe?

Acupuncture is a very safe medical procedure when administered by a qualified practitioner. Very few side effects have been found in clinical cases. Occasionally an animal's condition may deteriorate temporarily before improving. Because acupuncture balances the body's own system of healing and no chemicals are administered, complications rarely, if ever, develop.

## Does Acupuncture hurt?

A proper acupuncture therapy may induce distension and a feeling of heaviness along with contraction of local muscle. There is occasionally a brief moment of sensitivity as the needle penetrates the skin, then the sensation of energy or heat flowing. Once the needles are in place, most animals relax, some will even fall asleep. Sedation is not recommended before acupuncture treatment as it may interfere with the acupuncture effect.



*Dr. Novick graduated from the University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine in 2008 and received her Master of Public Health from the same school in 2011. She completed the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society's (IVAS) Basic Veterinary Acupuncture course in 2012 and completed the IVAS requirements for veterinary acupuncture certification in August 2014.*