

ANCHOR ANIMAL LINDSEY NAIMOLI, DVM

Holistic Healing for Your Animal

Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) is based on the belief that Qi (the body's vital energy) flows along meridians (channels) in the body and keeps the body's spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health in balance. TCVM aims to restore the bodies harmony between the natural opposing forces of yin and yang, which can block Qi and cause disease. TCVM includes acupuncture, food therapy, herbal therapy, massage, and physical exercise.

Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine offers a more individual approach to treating disease by selecting specific points on the body's surface to stimulate a response. Western or conventional medicine focuses on a herd health approach of using certain drugs to cure specific diseases but unfortunately not every animal responds the same way to the pharmaceuticals used in veterinary medicine. Additionally, the management of chronic diseases with pharmaceuticals can result in the animal experiencing adverse side effects that make long-term management on the drug impractical.

Traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture work by helping restore a healthy balance to the energy pathways of the body. This helps the body to work in an efficient way. Acupuncture therapy can be done with finger pressure, solid needles, injections of liquids (aqua-puncture) or electrical impulses (electroacupuncture). Acupuncture is one of the safest forms of medical treatment for animals.

Acupuncture Therapy

The traditional Chinese medicinal therapy of acupuncture is well known for its ability to facilitate healing of wounds and relieve the pain associated with musculoskeletal ailments. It is also used to encourage the body to heal medical problems. Through the insertion of needles into key "electrical" points of the body, the patient is encouraged to rebalance their body's energetic pathway. Acupuncture can stimulate nerves, increase blood circulation, relieve muscle spasms, and cause the release of hormones (such as endorphins, one of the body's pain control chemicals and cortisol, a natural steroid). By stimulating specific points on the body with the use of needles, blocked energy or Qi is released and health is restored.

Initially acupuncture treatments are done one to two times per week. Once improvement is noticed (usually 2 to 8 treatments) the treatments are continued as needed to maintain the improvement. After the patient has responded to their maximum benefit, treatment is done on an as needed basis. These "tune-ups" are generally done every 1 to 4 months. Some acute problems completely resolve and the patient will not need further treatment for that condition. Some patients with chronic illness problems will need to have tune-ups on a regular basis to keep them as comfortable as possible. Additionally, at home Chinese herbal medicines can be given to help nourish the physical body, moderate symptoms and can encourage healing.

Acupuncture Techniques

Acupressure: massage of acupuncture points, usually with fingers

Acupuncture: insertion of fine taper point solid needles into acupuncture points. These are usually left in for variable amounts of time, depending on their desire to sedate or tonify the acupuncture point(s), usually for 10 to 20 minutes.

Electrical Acupuncture: insertion of taper point solid needles into acupuncture points with stimulation of the points by mild electrical impulses.

Aqua-puncture: insertion of liquid (usually B-12) into the acupuncture points through small gauge needles. This technique works well for the pets that do not like to hold still for the time needed for acupuncture.

Neural Therapy Aqua-puncture: insertion of small amounts of lidocaine into acupuncture points

Treating Animal Diseases with Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been effective at treating the following diseases in animals:

- Musculoskeletal disease: reduce pain from arthritis, intervertebral disk disease, hip dysplasia
- Neurological disease: paralysis, neuropathic pain, seizures, anxiety
- Respiratory disease: asthma, chronic cough, nasal congestion & discharge
- Integumentary disease: allergic dermatitis, pruritus
- Gastrointestinal disease: diarrhea, irritable bowel disease, pancreatitis, stimulate digestion, stimulate appetite
- Endocrine diseases: strengthen the immune system, liver diseases, gallbladder diseases
- Reproductive diseases: promote reproductive cycles, parturition, mastitis, infertility