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What Is Medical Acupuncture?

Medical acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body, usually involving the insertion of fine, sterile needles, which have the ability to alter various biochemical and physiological conditions in order to achieve a healing effect. Veterinary medical acupuncture has evolved and grown since its origination from Traditional Chinese Medicine. In North America it has been used for decades, in both domestic and exotic animals, with proven results. Acupuncture is one of a variety of therapies a veterinarian may use to treat your pet.

How Does Acupuncture Work?

Veterinary medical acupuncture is a research and evidence based therapeutic method that uses needling to activate nerve fibers near a specific point. By stimulating these nerve fibers we can release muscle tension and balance neurotransmitter activity from the peripheral nervous system (individual nerves) to the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). For example, acupuncture is used to stimulate nerves, increase blood circulation, relieve muscle spasms, and results in the release of natural pain relieving hormones such as endorphins.

What Are Some Benefits of Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is known to have therapeutic effects in a wide variety of animal diseases. Pain modification is an important application of veterinary medical acupuncture, but there are much wider applications as well.

Examples of clinical conditions where veterinary medical acupuncture may be used are:

- Gastrointestinal disorders, including inflammatory and motility problems
- Respiratory problems, including recurrent infections and sinusitis
- Musculoskeletal disorders, including osteoarthritis, tendinitis, back/neck/knee pain
- Dermatological problems, including immune related allergies/skin disease
- Neurologic disorders, such as disk disease, spinal cord problems, and peripheral neuropathy

How Long Do Acupuncture Treatments Last And How Often Are They Needed?

The length and frequency of treatments depends on each individual patient and condition. For chronic conditions, one to two treatments per week for several weeks may be needed to make a meaningful difference. Stimulation of an individual acupuncture point may be for as little as 10 seconds or as long as 20 minutes. A positive response to acupuncture is generally noted within the first few treatments.

Dr. Suzanne Hoerle is our doctor on staff who performs medical acupuncture and will be happy to discuss acupuncture as a therapeutic option for your pet. Dr. Hoerle received her acupuncture training by CuraCore Integrative Medicine and Education Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. To inquire about scheduling a consultation, give us a call at 410-838-0085.