

Acupuncture for your pet - Frequently Asked Questions

Acupuncture has evolved from the ancient art of placing needles into special locations on the body to alleviate pain, improve recovery rates and increase resistance to disease.

How does Acupuncture work?

It works through the nervous system. The needles block the pain messages and encourage the brain and central nervous system to produce more of the body's natural pain killers. In conditions that are not painful, acupuncture may help to reset the body's normal functioning.

Will it Hurt my Pet?

The placing of the acupuncture needles blocks pain by stimulating certain nerves that then send important message to the brain. Sometimes animals may react to this sensation as though they are expecting pain but then relax because it does not occur. Most of the time they accept the fine needles very well and often become relaxed and sleepy during the treatment.

Frequency of Treatment

The usual course is once a week for four to six weeks. After four weeks we will know whether acupuncture is working for your pet. It is then that we can work out a plan that usually involves gradual withdrawal of the treatment so that the effect is maintained for as long as possible.

Is Acupuncture Safe?

It is very safe in the right hands. Legally it must be performed by a veterinary surgeon who is actively registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. There are very few cases in which we would have to be very cautious about using acupuncture, but your veterinary acupuncturist can advise you of these.

What Conditions are Treated with Acupuncture?

Pain is the most common indication for acupuncture. Usually this means pain associated with arthritis, but also muscle strains, pain secondary to disc disease and bony changes of the spine Other kinds of pain may also respond.

Functional conditions such as constipation in cats and irritable bowel type problems in dogs may also respond. Some dermatology/skin problems can also respond to acupuncture.

What Can I Expect during Treatment?

After examination, needles will be put into various parts of the body and moved or stimulated a few times. There is not a set 'dose' of acupuncture as there is for medication. Your vet will judge how much to do based on your pet's response both at the time and after the treatment. They may become sleepy or relaxed during the treatment.

And After the Treatment?

It is not uncommon for pets to go home and sleep very soundly for a long time. This is often a good sign as can be an indication that they will respond well to the treatment, although do not worry if they are not sleepy. Sometimes your pet may seem a little more euphoric than usual; this is also a good sign, but keep them quiet for the rest of the day or they may overdo things

Otherwise treat your pet normally after acupuncture. Do not change exercise, diet or medication unless it has been discussed with your vet.

What About Response?

Your pet may show one of three responses to treatment.

1. They may seem a little stiffer or more uncomfortable. This just means that the dose was a bit too much, but also shows that they should respond to treatment. After a day or two they will improve again and should be better than before. You must tell your vet so that they can adjust the treatment next time.
2. You may see no response. This is always disappointing but does not mean your pet will not respond. It may just be that they will take a little longer or that their improvement after the first treatment was too brief or small for you to notice. Not all animals or humans are acupuncture responders, but about 80% will respond positively to the treatment.
3. You may see an improvement. This may occur anytime in the three days after treatment. The signs that we are trying to treat may then return before the next treatment, but after each subsequent treatment the effects should last for longer, so that your pet may eventually not need further treatments for some time.

Contact us

Any further questions please don't hesitate to contact the practice on **01335 342111** to discuss whether acupuncture is appropriate for your pet.