

SERVICES OFFERED

How many acupuncture treatments are generally needed?

As a general rule, the longer that your pet has had a disease, the more sessions are needed to treat it. If the problem has occurred recently, such as a sudden attack of diarrhea, only 1-2 treatments may be necessary. If the problem is more long-standing, for example arthritis in an elderly dog, 4-8 treatments will typically be given, each at weekly intervals. After this, treatment frequency can be reduced to once every 1-4 months, as necessary to maintain the improvement. In the case of arthritis patients, the dose of conventional pain-killers can often be decreased, reducing the risk of side effects from these drugs.

How long does a treatment session last?

At each acupuncture session, the needles are left in place for 10-25 minutes. The complete session will last 45-60 minutes to allow time for examination of your pet and discussion about his/her health. The first session is typically longer, 60-75 minutes, because the pet's medical history is also discussed.

Can acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine be used preventatively to maintain health?

Absolutely. When examined from a Chinese perspective, the majority of animals have some kind of imbalance that will predispose them to disease later. By treating this imbalance right away, the chance of future disease can be reduced. From a Western perspective, acupuncture has been proven to strengthen the immune system and promote normal functioning of the organs, effects that are beneficial in both healthy and sick animals. Many performance horses have acupuncture treatments as part of their preventative health regimen and dogs and cats can benefit from this too.

Are these therapies proven to be effective?

There is an ever-increasing amount of research, in both humans and animals, that shows that acupuncture and herbal medicine are safe and effective therapies. Adverse reactions are extremely rare when they are performed by a veterinarian with special training in these therapies.

New York Veterinary Acupuncture Service offers acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, food therapy and *Tui-na* (medical massage) for dogs, cats and horses through house calls in NYC and the Hudson Valley.

These therapies are intended to complement and not replace conventional medicine, although they can often be beneficial when conventional medicine is not completely effective, for example dogs with arthritis that are still in pain despite anti-inflammatories, or where a more natural approach is desired. Lindsey Wedemeyer is a licensed veterinarian and is highly trained to safely and effectively use these modalities.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture involves insertion of very fine, sterile needles into the skin at specific points. However, it is not generally painful and releases relaxing endorphins that often cause patients to become drowsy, or even fall asleep, during treatment.

Acupuncture is most well-known for its proven pain-relieving effects. However, it has also been shown to reduce inflammation, promote circulation and regulate the immune, hormonal, gastrointestinal and reproductive systems, among other effects. It can therefore be used in the treatment of many different conditions (see back).

Numerous studies, involving both humans and animals, have shown that acupuncture is a safe and effective therapy. Acupuncture can also be used to treat side effects of medications, for example chemotherapy, or to promote healing and rehabilitation after surgery or injury.

Chinese Food Therapy

Diet is an incredibly important part of maintaining good health. According to Chinese medical theory, different foods have different energetic properties and so specific foods are recommended for different imbalances.

Whether you would like to cook a complete, whole-food diet for your pet or simply select a commercial food containing the prescribed foods, food therapy can be used to improve your animal's health.

Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese herbal medicine acts synergistically with acupuncture, and herbs are easily administered to animals as pills or capsules. Chinese herbal formulas rarely cause any side effects and can generally be used together with conventional medications. Numerous studies show that the natural chemicals in Chinese herbs have anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving, anti-oxidant and even anti-cancer effects, among other benefits.

Modern Chinese herbal formulas are composed of plant and mineral ingredients. Each ingredient is extensively tested to confirm its identity and rule out the presence of any possible contaminants, including heavy metals or microbes. After the herbal pills or capsules are made, they are again tested for identity and purity before being sold.

Modern herbal formulas never include ingredients from endangered species, such as tiger bone, and all ingredients are sustainably and ethically sourced. The only animal ingredients used are occasionally insects such as earthworms or by-products such as cow horn.

Tui-na (Medical Massage)

Tui-na works on the same principles as acupuncture, by affecting the flow of energy (*Qi*) in the body. It is most commonly used for musculoskeletal problems and post-surgical rehabilitation; it can help relieve pain and increase mobility. If appropriate, you can be taught a short massage routine to perform at home between acupuncture treatments.