

Acupuncture Fact Sheet

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is defined as the stimulation of a specific point on the body, with a specific method, to produce a therapeutic effect. Modern research has showed us that these specific points on the body, known as acupoints, are located in areas where there is a high density of free nerve endings, mast cells, small arterioles and lymphatic vessels. Numerous studies have indicated that the stimulation of acupoints induce release of beta-endorphin, serotonin and other neurotransmitters (which provide pain relief among other functions).

•Vital Energy or Qi

The ancient Chinese discovered the health of the body depends on the state of *Qi* (pronounced Chee). *Qi* is the life force or vital energy. There are two opposite forms of *Qi*: *Yin* and *Yang*. Physiologically, *Qi* flows through the body 24 hours per day, maintaining a balance of *Yin* and *Yang*. When the flow of *Qi* is interrupted by any pathological factor (such as a virus or bacteria), the balance of *Yin* and *Yang* will be lost and consequently a disease may occur.

Pain is interpreted as the blockage of *Qi* flow; acupuncture resolves this blockage, freeing the flow of *Qi* and enabling the body to heal itself.

Homeostasis is restored when *Yin* and *Yang Qi* are in balance.

•What's the history of Acupuncture?

Acupuncture has been practiced in both animals and human beings for thousands of years in China. One of the earliest acupuncture books was written by Dr. Bo Le in the *Qin-mu-gong* period (659 B.C. to 621 B.C.). Since then, acupuncture has been spreading in use and popularity throughout the world.

•What are acupuncture methods and goals?

Acupoints may be stimulated in a variety of ways. These techniques include dry needling, moxibustion, aqua-acupuncture and electro-stimulation. Whatever tools are used, the goal is always the same: restore the flow of *Qi* and allow homeostasis to return.

•How safe is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a very safe medical procedure when administered by a qualified practitioner. Very few side effects have been found.

•How many treatments are needed?

It depends upon the nature, severity and duration of diseases. A single treatment may be enough for an acute condition. A series of 3 to 10 treatments can resolve many chronic problems. Some degenerative conditions may need periodic treatments over time.

•Does acupuncture hurt?

A proper acupuncture therapy may induce distention, and a heavy sensation along with contraction of the local muscle. Over 95% of patients are comfortable with acupuncture therapy. Some animals will fall asleep during acupuncture treatment. Sedation is not recommended before acupuncture treatment as it may interfere with the acupuncture effect.

•Who is qualified to perform veterinary acupuncture?

Only licensed veterinarians are eligible to practice acupuncture in most states in the US. A certified acupuncture training course is highly recommended before performing veterinary acupuncture.

•What physiological effects are induced by Acupuncture?

Numerous studies show that acupuncture stimulation induces the following effects:

- Pain relief
- Regulation of gastrointestinal motility
- Anti-inflammatory effect
- Immuno-regulation
- Hormone and reproductive regulation
- Anti-febrile effects; microcirculation promotion

•When is Acupuncture indicated?

Clinical trials indicate that the acupuncture therapy can be effective in the following conditions, though certainly not limited to this listing:

- Musculoskeletal problems: muscle soreness, back pain, disc problems, osteoarthritis, degenerative joint disease
- Neurological disorders: seizure, laryngeal hemiplegia, facial and radial nerve paralysis
- Gastrointestinal disorders: diarrhea, gastric ulcers, colic, vomiting, constipation and impaction
- Other chronic conditions: anhidrosis, heaves, asthma, cough, uveitis, behavioral problems, Cushing's disease, hypothyroidism, infertility, hyperthyroidism, renal failure, geriatric weakness, skin problems, etc.
- Performance enhancement and prevention of disease

•Why is Acupuncture frequently combined with herbs?

Sometimes the application of Chinese Herbal Medication is chosen by the knowledgeable veterinarian as a support for the acupuncture, or on occasion, in

lieu of it. Herbs are frequently used in situations that have not responded to traditional western veterinary medical practices.

Vermont Integrative Veterinary Associates

Donald P. Thompson, DVM, FAAVA

Emily K. Bond, DVM

2089 Laporte Rd. Morrisville, VT 05661

www.vtintegrativevet.com • vtintegrativevet@aol.com

- *Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm*
Emergency services available 24 hours a day