

# 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.

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