

ACUPUNCTURE FOR YOUR PET

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is the practice of inserting fine, solid needles into the body for pain relief or, in some cases, to help the body deal with certain diseases.



HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

It works through the nervous system. The needles block pain messages from getting to the brain by stimulating other nerves, that do not cause feelings of pain, but instead send more important messages. This encourages the brain and central nervous system to produce more of the body's natural painkillers. Acupuncture may help to reset the body's normal functioning.

WILL IT HURT MY PET?

Not at all. Sometimes animals may initially react to the sensation of the needles as though they are expecting pain, but then relax because it does not occur. Most animals accept the treatment very well and often become very relaxed and sleepy.

WOULD MY PET NEED TO BE SEDATED?

Only if the condition we are treating your pet for meant that any touch or stimulus would cause pain. Generally it is uncommon for animals to need to be sedated and, perhaps surprisingly, cats and rabbits accept acupuncture treatment very well.

HOW OFTEN WOULD MY PET BE TREATED?

Usually once a week, for 4-6 weeks. After 4 weeks we will know whether the acupuncture is working for your pet. Then, depending on the condition and how they have responded, we will work out a plan so that the effect of the treatment is maintained for as long as possible.

IS ACUPUNCTURE SAFE?

In the right hands, acupuncture is very safe and there have been no official reports of any problems in animals but legally it must only be performed by a veterinary surgeon.

WHAT KINDS OF CONDITIONS ARE TREATED WITH ACUPUNCTURE?

Pain is the most common condition treated with acupuncture. The most common type of pain we see responding to this type of treatment is arthritis, muscle strains, pain secondary to disc disease and bony changes of the spine. Other kinds of pain associated with functional conditions such as constipation in cats and irritable bowel type problems in dogs may also respond.

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, so 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 and relaxed during the treatment.

AND AFTER THE TREATMENT?

It is not uncommon to notice a change in your pet's behaviour after the treatment but this is nothing to worry about and generally just a sign that the treatment has been effective. We do advise that you try to keep your pet calm and quiet for the rest of the day but otherwise treat them as you normally would. Do not change exercise, diet or medication unless it has been discussed with your vet.

WHAT ABOUT RESPONSE?

Your pet may show one of 3 responses to treatment:

1. They seem stiff or uncomfortable. This means the dose was a little too much, but also shows they responded well to treatment. Stiffness will improve in a few days.
2. You see no response. This does not mean your pet will not respond; it may just mean the dose was too small or their condition will take a little longer to treat. It usually takes about four treatments to see the full effect.
3. You see an improvement. This may occur anytime in the three days after treatment. After each subsequent treatment the effects should last for longer, so that your pet may eventually not need more treatments for some time.



THE VETENARY CENTRE:
80 Bellshill Road UDDINGSTON G71 7NE
t: (01698) 817 999
e: vets@thetvetcentreuddingston.co.uk

To find out more, visit: tvcu.co.uk

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