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Acupuncture for Animals

Many veterinarians are offering alternative health care. The most common alternative therapy used is acupuncture. You might think that your cat or dog would never hold still for the acupuncture needles. In reality, most animals thoroughly enjoy the peaceful state that arises from acupuncture.

Acupuncture was discovered when lame battle horses became sound after being struck by arrows at certain places. These places were later determined to be acupuncture points. Acupuncture has been performed on animals since the Zang and Chow Dynasties around 2000-3000 BCE.

The treatment of pain is the most common use for acupuncture. Acupuncture results in blocking pain both at the spinal cord and the brain. Arthritis, disc disease, lameness, asthma, and inflammatory bowel disease are a number of the conditions that benefit from treatment.

Certain acupuncture points become active during disease states. These active points along with the history and examination of the tongue and pulse allow a veterinary acupuncturist to make a Chinese diagnosis. Acupuncture is then performed to balance the energy or Qi (pronounced "Chee") within the body.

The needles generally stay in place for 15 to 20 minutes. Occasionally, there is a mild reaction as the needle is inserted. Sometimes electroacupuncture is used to stimulate the points with electrical activity. Aquapuncture is the injection of a fluid such a Vitamin B into the points.

Acupuncture is initially performed weekly for six weeks. The interval is then gradually increased to a maintenance program of every three months. Side effects include a temporary worsening of the symptoms for 48 hours during the healing phase in some pets. Some patients will be tired for 24 hours after acupuncture.

Acupuncture is a very safe and effective treatment for many disease states. Remember to ask your veterinarian about acupuncture as a treatment modality.