

## Acupuncture/Acupressure in Dogs and Cats

Acupuncture is a form of traditional Chinese veterinary medicine, which focuses on restoring the energy balance in the body and promoting healing. The therapy is performed by the insertion of fine needles into the patient's body at specified points, called acupressure points, where nerves and blood vessels converge. These are believed to be the points where energy is transmitted throughout the dog or cats' body. The needles placed in these areas increase blood flow to promote healing. Acupuncture also stimulates the nervous system which increases the release of anti-inflammatory and pain relieving substances to reduce discomfort. A less invasive technique called acupressure, which involves pressure at the acupuncture points for 10 to 15 minutes. This technique is preferred in hard to reach areas and animals that may not tolerate needles.



Most often acupuncture is used to treat arthritis and joint inflammation, but can also be used in pets with chronic back issues or acute injuries. Pets with gastrointestinal upset and pancreatitis can also benefit from acupuncture as it can help alleviate nausea.

Although being in the clinic can make pets a little nervous, they experience relaxation after needles are inserted; a typical session lasts 20-30 minutes. The effects of acupuncture are cumulative so to get the best benefit, multiple sessions are recommended. In the

beginning 3 sessions a week is recommended for several weeks, and then sessions are tapered off as the pet improves so visits are scheduled less frequently. Following a session your pet may seem more stiff or tired; these symptoms often resolve within 24-48 hours.

Acupuncture is recommended to be used in combination with therapeutic laser therapy and traditional medications. The combination of therapies can help reduce your pet's dependence on pain medications and lead to better management of pain. Please contact Dr. Brockman if you would like to discuss how acupuncture could benefit and augment your pet's health care.

