

ACUPUNCTURE

What is Animal Acupuncture?

How do I find a veterinary acupuncturist?

A veterinary acupuncturist must be a licensed veterinarian, and in most states, it is illegal for other practitioners to practice acupuncture on animals. Your veterinary acupuncturist should have completed an extensive foundation training course and maintain his or her knowledge with regular continuing education courses. A veterinary acupuncturist should have completed training by one of the major foundation course providers (International Veterinary Acupuncture Society, Chi Institute, or Medical Acupuncture for Veterinarians) and some have enough advanced training to have earned advanced status as a "Fellow of the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture" (FAAVA).

For a listing of certified veterinary acupuncturists in your state, please contact the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture or visit online at aava.org.

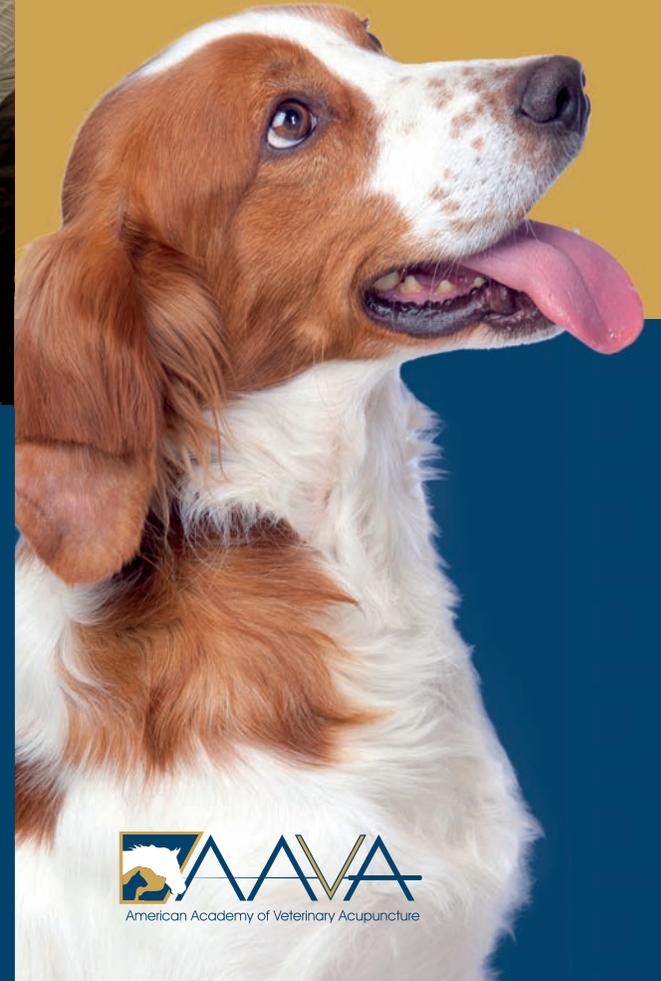


AAVA MISSION STATEMENT

To improve animal health care by the advancement of veterinary acupuncture and Traditional Oriental Veterinary Medicine through education, research and leadership.

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Acupuncture: What is it?

Acupuncture and various other versions of acuthery are among the oldest medical procedures in recorded history, while animal acupuncture is slightly less ancient. The original theories of traditional Chinese medicine formed the basis of acupuncture - needling certain spots on the body regulated the flow of "Chi" (energy), which flowed through and nourished the tissues and organs. Today, we do not have a full understanding of the neurologic or biochemical basis of acupuncture, but that is changing as the results of studies are published on a regular basis.

What animals are treated with Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is used in all species. Horses and cattle have been treated with acupuncture in China and Korea since ancient times. Dogs, horses and cats receive acupuncture for many common ailments, and animal athletes are frequently treated for sports injuries. The application of acupuncture has expanded to zoo animals, small mammals, pet birds and raptors, and sea mammals.



How does acupuncture work?

In traditional Oriental medicine, "Chi" ran through channels (called meridians), which can be thought of as rivers of energy. These rivers can become blocked like a dam, and needling releases the obstruction. In modern scientific terms, needling specific points leads to the release of chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemical mediators can change the perception of pain and lead to release of other chemical mediators that influence organ function. This improved "chemical communication" stimulates healing. There are many approaches to treatment, but veterinarians are the only acupuncture professionals trained to understand both the traditional Oriental as well as the scientific aspects of acupuncture therapy in animals.

What will happen during acupuncture treatments?

Acupuncture treatments are usually well tolerated by animals. Most veterinarians will want your animal as relaxed as possible, and therapy may lead to further relaxation. Acupuncture needles are very thin, solid, sterile needles. Needle insertion is usually not painful, however, certain points can be sensitive. Multiple acupuncture needles will be placed depending on the point prescription. Some animals will become very quiet and even fall asleep during a treatment. Treatment time will vary depending on the animal, the acupuncture technique and the condition being treated. Acupuncture effects are cumulative so several treatments are usually necessary for chronic medical conditions, then tapered down as needed for maintenance. Acute conditions usually need fewer treatments.

What can acupuncture treat?

In people and animals, there is good evidence that acupuncture is effective for the treatment of musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, respiratory, urinary, skin, reproductive, neurologic, behavioral disorders, as well as for stress. In cancer patients, acupuncture can be extremely effective for the alleviation of pain, fatigue, treatment of gastrointestinal disorders such as nausea, vomiting, inappetence, and improving the quality of life.

Are there any side effects?

Acupuncture can result in a relaxed state, which can be misinterpreted as lethargy or a worsening condition. This is temporary and indicates that the animal is indeed sensitive to the effects of acupuncture. Your veterinarian will adjust the treatment, if needed, at your next visit. Acupuncture needles are sterilized, so infection from the needle site is extremely rare. Any concerns that you have about the treatment should be discussed with your veterinarian.



ANIMAL HEALTH CARE