



# 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 other diseases.

## How does acupuncture work?

It works through the nervous system. The needles block pain messages and encourage the brain and nervous system to produce more of the body's natural painkillers. In conditions that are not painful, acupuncture may help to reset the body's normal functioning.

## Will it hurt my pet?

Acupuncture needles stimulate nerves that do not cause the unpleasant feelings of pain that we are trying to treat. They stimulate other nerves that send a more important message to the brain, which is how they block pain. Sometimes, animals may react to this sensation as they are expecting pain, but will then relax because it does not occur. Most of the time they accept the fine needles very well and often become relaxed and sleepy during the treatment.

## Would my pet need to be sedated for this treatment?

It is uncommon for pets to need sedation. This would only usually happen if any touch or stimulus causes them pain.

## How often would my pet be treated?

The usual course is once a week for four to six weeks. After four weeks, we will know whether the acupuncture is working for your pet and, depending on the condition and how they have responded, we will work out a plan that usually involves tailing off the treatment so that the effect is maintained for as long as possible.

## Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is very safe in the right hands. Legally, it must be performed by a trained Veterinary Surgeon. There have been no official reports of problems in animals. There are a very small number of cases in which we would have to be cautious about using acupuncture, but your Veterinary Surgeon will always advise you.

## What kinds of conditions are treated with acupuncture?

Pain is the most common indication for acupuncture. Usually this means pain associated with arthritis, but also muscle strains, pain secondary to disc disease and bony changes to the spine. Functional conditions including constipation in cats and irritable bowel problems in dogs may also respond well.

## What can I expect during treatment?

After examination, needles will be placed into various parts of the body and moved or stimulated a few times.