

# FAQ for Veterinary Acupuncture



*Merri receives electro-acupuncture treatment for paralysis.*





### What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is defined as the stimulation of a specific point on the body with a specific method, resulting in a therapeutic homeostatic effect. The specific point on the body is called “*Shu-xu*” or acupuncture point (acupoint). The ancient Chinese discovered 361 acupoints in humans and 173 acupoints in animals.

Modern research shows that acupoints are located in the areas where there is a high density of free nerve endings, mast cells, small arterioles and lymphatic vessels. Most acupoints are motor points. A great number of studies indicate that stimulation of acupoints induces the release of beta-endorphin, serotonin and other neurotransmitters. Therefore, acupuncture for pain relief is well supported by these scientific studies. As more studies are conducted, the mechanism of this ancient therapy will be better understood.

### Vital Energy or Qi

The ancient Chinese discovered that the health of the body depends on the state of *Qi* (pronounced “chee”). *Qi* is the life force or vital energy. There are two opposite forms of *Qi*: *Yin* and *Yang*. Physiologically, *Qi* flows throughout the body all the time, maintaining a balance of *Yin* and *Yang*. When the flow of *Qi* is interrupted by any pathological factor (such as a virus or bacteria), the balance of *Yin* and *Yang* will be lost and, consequently, a disease may occur.

Pain is interpreted as the blockage of *Qi* flow (or no free flow of *Qi*). Acupuncture stimulation resolves this blockage, freeing the flow of *Qi* and enabling the body to heal itself. Homeostasis is restored when *Yin* and *Yang Qi* are in balance.

### What is the History of Acupuncture?

Acupuncture has been practiced in both animals and humans for thousands of years in China. The earliest veterinary acupuncture book “*Bo Le Zhen Jing*” (*Bole’s Canon of Veterinary Acupuncture*) is believed to have been written by Dr. Bo Le in the *Qin-mu-gong* period (659BCE to 621BCE). Veterinary treatment protocols using acupuncture are well documented in this textbook. Since then, acupuncture was, and still is, a part of the mainstream veterinary medical system in China.

### What are Acupuncture methods and goals?

Acupoints may be stimulated in a variety of ways. These techniques include dry needling, moxibustion, aqu-acupuncture and electro-acupuncture. Whatever tools are used, the goal is always the same: to restore the flow of *Qi* and allow homeostasis to return.

### How safe is acupuncture therapy?

Acupuncture is a very safe medical procedure when administered by a qualified practitioner. Very few side effects have been found in clinical cases.

### How long does each treatment take?

Each session may take 20 to 60 minutes.

### How many treatments are needed?

It depends upon the nature, severity and duration of a disease. A single treatment may be enough for an acute condition. A series of 3 to 10 treatments can resolve many chronic problems. Some degenerative conditions may need monthly treatments over time.

### Does acupuncture hurt?

A proper acupuncture treatment may induce distention, and a heaviness sensation along with contraction of local muscle. Over 95% of patients are comfortable with acupuncture therapy. Due to the relaxation effect, some animals will fall asleep during acupuncture treatment. Sedation is not recommend-

ed before acupuncture treatment, as it may interfere with the acupuncture effect.

### How much does a veterinary acupuncture treatment cost?

It depends on location, practitioner, species and disease. A typical range of fees for a single session of acupuncture will vary from \$80-\$300.

### Who is qualified to perform veterinary acupuncture?

Only licensed veterinarians are eligible to practice acupuncture in most states in the USA. A veterinarian certified in acupuncture is highly recommended to perform veterinary acupuncture.

### Where can I find a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (CVA)?

A qualified veterinary acupuncturist can be found at the website: [www.tcvm.com](http://www.tcvm.com).

### What physiological effects are induced by Acupuncture?

Numerous studies show that acupuncture stimulation induces the following physiological effects:

- Pain Relief
- Regulation of gastrointestinal motility
- Anti-inflammatory effect
- Immuno-regulation
- Hormone and reproductive regulation
- Anti-febrile effect; microcirculation promotion





## When is Acupuncture Indicated?

Clinical trials indicate that acupuncture therapy can be effective in the following conditions:

- Musculoskeletal problems: muscle soreness, back pain, disc problems, osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease.
- Neurological disorders: seizure, laryngeal hemiplegia, facial and radial nerve paralysis.
- Gastrointestinal disorders: diarrhea, gastric ulcers, colic, vomiting, constipation and impaction.
- Other chronic conditions: anhidrosis, heaves, asthma, cough, uveitis, behavioral problems, Cushing's disease, hypothyroidism, infertility, hyperthyroidism, renal failure, geriatric weakness and skin problems.
- Performance enhancement and the prevention of disease

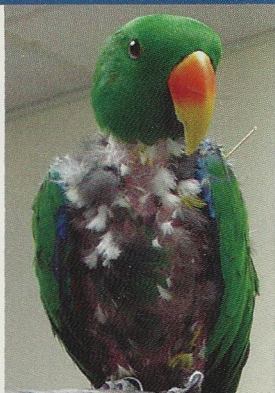
## Cautions and Contraindications

Acupuncture is cautiously used, or may be contraindicated with the following conditions:

- Fracture
- Pregnancy
- Open Wound
- Infectious Diseases

## Why is Acupuncture frequently combined with herbs?

Sometimes the application of Chinese Herbal Medicine is chosen by the knowledgeable veterinarian as a support for acupuncture, or on occasion, in lieu of it. Herbs are frequently used in situations that have not responded to traditional western veterinary medical practices.



## What about chiropractic and massage?

The veterinarian may choose to use *Tui-na*, a form of Chinese manipulative therapy often used in conjunction with acupuncture and Chinese herbs. From a conventional medicine perspective, *Tui-na* can be thought of as corresponding to a combination of acupressure, conventional massage and chiropractic techniques. It can be used to treat both acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions, as well as many non-musculoskeletal conditions. It is also useful as a preventative medicine therapy, because it promotes balance in the body. Small and large animals and exotic species respond well to *Tui-na* treatments and it can be used for animals that will not allow acupuncture needles to be placed. It is safe and effective with no known side effects. Veterinarians who have been certified in Traditional Chinese Herbal Medicine, as well as *Tui-na* can also be geographically located via the website [www.tcvm.com](http://www.tcvm.com).



*Dr. Shen Xie performing Tui-na on a horse.*

## Does Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) include any special foods?

Yes, TCVM practitioners may recommend special foods to use or to eliminate some foods the animal is on, based upon the Traditional Chinese Food Energetics and TCVM diagnosis.