

## Stonehenge Vets and Acupuncture

One of our vets, Lucinda Nash, BVSc, BSc (Hons), MRCVS carries out acupuncture. Lucinda is a member of the Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists (ABVA), completing her foundation course in 2013.

Acupuncture is performed currently at the Durrington Practice with the owners present if they would like to stay with their pet. Owners who would prefer not to be present are welcome to wait in the waiting room.

If you are interested in acupuncture for your pet please feel free to discuss this with one of our veterinary surgeons.



### What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture was developed in Asia over 5000 years ago and has played a crucial role in Traditional Chinese Medicine. During acupuncture fine sterile needles are inserted into the skin at certain points that are located on channels which connect specific organs to the skin surface. Needles can also be inserted into muscles. The needles are usually left in for 10 to 20 minutes. The insertion of needles increases the body's release of natural pain killers for example endorphin and serotonin. Therefore acupuncture can be used to alleviate pain, improve recovery rates and increase resistance to disease. The needles are very well tolerated by most animals, who often become very relaxed and even sleepy during the session.



### Examples of conditions routinely treated:

- Arthritis e.g. elbows, shoulders, hips, stifles and hocks
- Back conditions e.g. spondylitis / spondylosis and disc disease
- Myofascial pain syndrome and myofascial trigger points
- Hip dysplasia
- Muscle & ligament sprains / strains and spasms
- Paralysis / paresis
- Chronic kidney disease
- Lick granulomas and other chronic skin condition

## **Acupuncture sessions – what do they involve?**

Acupuncture starts with a diagnosis of a medical condition obtained by your veterinary surgeon. If you are being referred from another practice a full clinical history will be obtained from your veterinary surgeon. Your pet will be assessed at the start of the session to make sure it is healthy enough to have acupuncture and assess the condition to be treated, finding any particular tender areas.

Most pets will require an initial course of 4-6 weekly treatments before we can assess how beneficial the acupuncture will be. Depending on your pet's progress then regular top-ups may be required to maintain the therapeutic effect. About 10-30% of animals – along with some diseases – are refractory to acupuncture and so will not respond to treatment.



## **The effects and side effects of acupuncture**

After acupuncture pain relief should be seen. Other behavioural changes may also be seen such as improved appetite and demeanour. For the first one to two days the animal may be more tired and initially stiff. Overall acupuncture has few side effects and can be used in combination with other treatments including medications, diet, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.

Acupuncture is becoming increasingly accepted and integrated into conventional veterinary practice. Acupuncture in the UK may legally only be performed by a veterinary surgeon or a qualified veterinary nurse, acting under the direct supervision of a veterinary surgeon trained in acupuncture. Many insurance companies will now include complimentary treatments as part of their cover.

