



VETERINARY HOSPITAL & HOTEL

9151 Ustick Road · Boise, ID 83704 · (208) 327-7706 · Fax (208) 327-0676 · [www.catdr.com](http://www.catdr.com)

## INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE/ACUPUNCTURE



**Integrative medicine** refers to the utilization of both eastern (traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and western (standard) medical techniques to diagnose and treat disease. These two separate modalities of medicine are often complimentary to each other and can offer better results with fewer side effects.

Western medicine relies on our knowledge of biological function to treat disease states. Drugs and surgery are commonly recommended. Medications and surgery can provide quick and effective results, but they may also have undesirable short and long-term side effects. Many western medicine therapies are aimed at one specific symptom or disease.

Eastern medicine utilizes our scientific knowledge of biological function but applies it to the animal as a whole, taking into account the role that personality, environment, diet, and overall health status may be playing in the disease process. In this way, the diagnosis and treatments are tailored specifically for your cat. Eastern medicine recognizes the fact that disease represents an unbalanced state in the body and that an unbalance cannot occur in just one area without affecting the body as a whole. Eastern medicine therapies usually are slower to take effect but are generally free from unwanted side effects.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been utilized for thousands of years all over the world. Over time, more has been learned and documented, and it is now a widely accepted method of treatment for both human and animal disease processes. Since there is quite a bit of overlap between TCM and western medicine as far as our understanding of diseases goes, when both modalities are used together, the patient usually experiences a greater benefit. Chinese medicine can offer a work-up, diagnosis, and treatment plan just like standard western medicine.

Examples of Traditional Chinese Medicine that have been successfully used in animals include acupuncture, massage (Tui'na), food therapy, and herbal therapy.

### **What is acupuncture?**

Acupuncture is the insertion of small, sterile needles at certain anatomical locations on the body. These locations are along “meridians” which are pathways of energy flow. Energy in Chinese Medicine is referred to as Qi (pronounced “chee”). This Qi flow must be balanced in order for a state of health to be achieved. When this flow is unbalanced or blocked, disease results. Acupuncture restores this balance. Acupuncture points are chosen based on your cat’s specific needs.

### **How does it work?**

In western terms, the insertion of acupuncture needles is known to affect all major organ systems by altering biochemical and physiological processes. Acupuncture attempts to assist the body’s own natural healing ability. Acupuncture is most recognized for relieving pain by increasing endorphins (natural pain killers), but it can also increase circulation, release neurotransmitters and neuro-hormones, relieve muscle tension, stimulate nerve endings, and stimulate the immune system. In Eastern terms, it restores the vital flow of Chi allowing the body to achieve a state of balance.



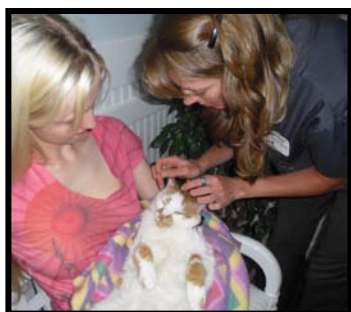
### **What can it be used for?**

Acupuncture can be used for almost any disease or health concern your pet may have. It can be used for pain, gastro-intestinal disorders, metabolic diseases, immune system problems, behavioral problems, respiratory issues, appetite stimulation, and much more. Acupuncture can easily be worked into your pet’s current or ongoing treatments or therapies. It provides a beneficial treatment option to augment western medicine or when traditional treatments have stopped being effective.

Your cat will receive a comprehensive exam with an Eastern based diagnosis. The treatment plan will be tailored specifically for your cat.

### **How is it performed and is it painful?**

Acupuncture uses extremely small, thin, sterile needles that are inserted just a few millimeters under your pets skin. Some animals may experience a brief moment of sensitivity. Once the needles are placed, many animals are very relaxed and may even fall asleep. The number of needles inserted and how long they are left in will depend on what is being treated and the overall health of your pet. Other acupuncture techniques that may be used are the injection of liquids, such as vitamin B, under the skin into a certain acupuncture point (aqua-acupuncture), the application of heat to the needles (moxibustion), or the use of a small electrical current applied to the needles (electro-acupuncture).



### **Is it safe?**

In the hands of a trained acupuncturist, it is one of the safest therapies available. Side effects are extremely rare. Occasionally, an animal’s condition may worsen before you see improvement. This is referred to as a “healing crisis” and can be normal in some cases. Rare complications would include accidentally ingested needles, broken needles, a needle being placed too deeply, or infection.

### **How many treatments are needed? How long does a treatment take?**

Multiple acupuncture treatments may be needed initially to obtain the desired result. This varies from pet to pet. Some pets will experience improvement after just one treatment although weekly appointments for 4-6 weeks are more typical and will provide longer lasting benefits. Your appointment schedule will depend on your pet’s concerns, health status, and response to treatment. After the initial treatment period, the intervals between appointments will be extended and we will work with you to determine a beneficial maintenance schedule. Clients should be willing to commit to several treatments prior to determining if acupuncture is providing a true benefit.