

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Alternative medicine is any system of healing or treating disease considered to be outside the realm of conventional care. At SAGE, we offer “integrative medicine,” also known as “complementary” or “holistic” medicine, where alternative forms of treatment are frequently used alongside Western medical treatments.

Our integrative medicine service has its foundations in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), an ancient form of care that only in recent decades has enjoyed introduction to the Western world. Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) is TCM’s veterinary counterpart, and has been used to treat all types of animals. TCVM takes a holistic approach to medicine by assessing the well-being of the whole patient and not just its specific disease.

There are five branches of TCVM. These branches include acupuncture, herbal medicine, food therapy, and Tui-Na (medical massage). The fifth branch of TCM in humans is Tai Chi. In the veterinary integrative world, we equate this to exercise, and how it can be accomplished and emphasized given an individual patient’s own limitations or issues.

Conditions that benefit from an integrative approach include pain management, gastrointestinal issues, asthma, cancer treatment, chemotherapy side effects, endocrine disease, and other systemic disorders. Geriatric patients are seen to help improve their quality of life and longevity during the aging process.

When we integrate TCVM with conventional medicine, our patients benefit from modern diagnostics and therapy, along with ancient, time-tested techniques. Your Integrative Medicine doctor will determine the appropriate treatment after speaking with you and conducting a detailed history and examination of your pet. Each patient’s unique needs, history, and circumstances are considered to create personalized treatment plans that optimize each pet’s health.



Owners are often surprised by how well their pets tolerate acupuncture needles. Most lie down quietly during the procedure and some even sleep. For those pets who are not good candidates for acupuncture, cold laser therapy may be an alternative.

ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture entails the stimulation of specific points on the body. This ancient method of treatment can be traced back over 3,000 years.

Acupuncture needles are placed at specific points in the body based on meridians. A meridian is a channel within the body said to circulate “qi,” or the body’s vital energy. Acupuncture points are closely associated with blood vessels, the lymphatic system, muscles, and high concentrations of nerve endings. Stimulation of acupuncture points has been shown to cause endorphin release, hormonal changes, and changes in gastrointestinal motility, to name a few examples.

Many people are surprised to see how well most pets tolerate acupuncture needles. The needles are very small and most pets lie quietly with them in place. If a patient doesn’t care for needles, cold laser therapy may be used to stimulate acupuncture points.

HERBAL MEDICINE

Herbal Medicine is another component of TCVM. Our Integrative Medicine doctors prescribe herbal ingredients in combinations or formulas to treat particular disease patterns that tend to be more specific than simply the disease process in question.

Our doctors have undergone training to learn about the effects of both individual herbs and herbal combinations, as well as herbal safety and toxicities.

Herbal medicines are frequently used to treat many acute and chronic issues in all areas of medicine, and can often reduce or eliminate side effects seen with some conventional medicines.

FOOD THERAPY

Food therapy is considered another branch of TCM. The use of a whole food diet to treat ailments of the body is a central tenet of holistic medicine. Food therapy involves the tailoring of diet plans to individual patients and may involve commercial products and/or homemade diets.

Pet owners can pursue food therapy for overall health promotion and preventative care or for the treatment of a specific clinical condition.

While Western nutrition focuses mainly on the fat, protein, carbohydrate, and vitamin content of food, Chinese food therapy classifies food by its energetic effects.

Food therapy encourages the use of minimally processed ingredients. Emphasis is placed on helping owners create a balanced diet for their pet, whether that involves including a commercial product or learning to make a diet at home.

MASSAGE THERAPY

Tui-Na is the fourth branch of Traditional Chinese Medicine and is a combination of acupressure, conventional massage, and musculoskeletal manipulation techniques. Your Integrative Medicine doctor may use this technique on your pet (and teach you too!)

Tui-Na techniques help to soothe joints, and promote blood circulation and general comfort. It is frequently used for the treatment of pain and musculoskeletal conditions.

LASER THERAPY

Laser therapy is a modality that is not specifically grounded in Chinese medicine. Laser therapy is a non-invasive procedure that relieves pain and promotes healing. It does not require the patient to be shaved or clipped.

In this procedure, a laser wand is used to apply a beam of light to the affected area, penetrating the body's tissues.

Laser therapy is also frequently used by our physical rehabilitation department. It is used to treat injuries such as muscle strains, arthritis, and tendon and ligament sprains.

Laser therapy has also been found to help patients regenerate nerve tissue after surgery. It is frequently used during acupuncture to stimulate an acupuncture point. It is also used for patients that do not enjoy needle placement.

Please note:

Integrative Medicine services may vary by SAGE location. Please call your nearest SAGE hospital for the most up-to-date information.

We provide comprehensive specialized care for your pet through the integration of science and compassion.

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Integrative Medicine



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