

Ask the Vet



Angelique Fuller, DVM

Dr. Angelique Fuller received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design and Production for Theater from The North Carolina School of the Arts in 1997, a Master of Science in Animal Health Science from The North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University in 2003 and a Doctorate of

Veterinary Medicine from North Carolina State University in 2007. She is a member of the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association, the

American Veterinary Medical Association, The International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management and the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture. Dr. Fuller has had a wide variety of life experience and finds that her art and medicine backgrounds blend together seamlessly. Growing up, she has always had a love for animals and realized early that a pet's health and well-being played an important role in the human-animal bond. Dr. Fuller's professional interests include all aspects of family pet practice with a focus on internal medicine, acupuncture and chronic pain management.

Veterinary Acupuncture

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture in simple terms is the practice of placing needles into points along the body to create a healing effect. The practice of acupuncture in people dates back 3000 years ago in Asia. And the Chinese treated horses with acupuncture as early as the Ming Period.

How does acupuncture work?

Eastern medicine believes that acupuncture works by resolving an imbalance in the body, resulting in faster healing and decreased pain. There are also good scientific studies with people and animals showing acupuncture does cause changes in the body that promote healing and reduce pain. Acupuncture does this by increasing blood circulation, muscle relaxation and stimulating peripheral nerves and by the release of endorphins. The average time an acupuncture needle remains in the animal is between 10 – 20 minutes.

What disease conditions is acupuncture commonly used for in the small animal patient?

The most common uses are for neurological and musculoskeletal conditions such as Intervertebral Disk Disease and Arthritis. Acupuncture is also helpful for many other conditions including: general pain management associated with chronic diseases, lick granulomas, diarrhea, constipation and asthma.

How often does an animal need to receive acupuncture and when do we see results?

This depends on the animal's condition. In general, chronic disease conditions will require 1-2 weekly treatments for 4-6 weeks, then the goal would be to decrease to every 2 weeks, then monthly or bi-monthly for maintenance. Owners may not see a response to treatment on the first treatment, but will typically see a positive change by the third or fourth treatment. In acute injuries, improvement is often seen sooner, but still may

require a series of treatments.

Acupuncture can be used alone, or more commonly in conjunction with other therapies. The use of acupuncture can often allow for decreasing the amount of medications needed, such as NSAIDs and sedating pain medications. It is also wonderful for those patients who cannot tolerate certain medications. If you think your pet may benefit from acupuncture or alternative therapies, speak with your veterinarian about the different options available for your pet.

“NOT TO HURT OUR HUMBLE BRETHREN THE ANIMAL IS OUR FIRST DUTY TO THEM, BUT TO STOP THERE IS NOT ENOUGH. WE HAVE A HIGHER MISSION: TO BE OF SERVICE TO THEM WHENEVER THEY REQUIRE IT.” —St. Francis of Assisi



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720 Guilford College Road. (near I-40)
336.852.0200 • www.gjvh.com