

Integrative Medicine at Castro Valley Companion Animal Hospital using Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM)

Information for the New Client

Overview:

Chinese medicine comes to us from a centuries-long history based on observation of the natural world and how the forces of nature interact. Achieving a diagnosis and treatment plan in Chinese medicine does not utilize the same techniques as are used in Western medicine. A comprehensive history is essential for the TCVM practitioner to begin to formulate an understanding of the problem(s) seen in a patient. Diagnostic steps involve observation of the pet and hands-on palpation of all the body areas including the tongue and pulses.

It might seem obvious that Chinese medicine uses a different language to describe a diagnosis and treatment approach and that's exactly the case. Conditions and patterns are identified using terminology that is quite different from what is used for Western medicine. At the same time, some of the terms used will be the same English word (such as Kidney or Liver) but will mean very different things from what you have experienced before.

For these reasons, acupuncture sessions are not to be considered alternatives to routine physical exams and standard laboratory testing. By California Law, your pet will still require Wellness exams at least once a year. Additionally, in most cases, no vaccines or lab tests will be performed during acupuncture consults or sessions.

All previous medical history, including lab work and radiographs (X-rays) are still essential pieces of information that the Veterinary Acupuncturist must consider prior to the first session to develop a proper diagnosis and treatment plan. Therefore, therapy in TCVM is not a substitute for a complete and proper Western examination and evaluation.

Goals and Expectations:

No form of medicine (Western or TCVM) is always 100% successful. There are always cases that respond only partially or not at all. While we would like to see results immediately, in general up to eight treatments may be needed to see response.

An important part of the initial consultation is to identify the most pressing condition(s) that your pet is suffering from and select a therapeutic approach that addresses them.

While we would all like to see every patient restored to perfect health, this is truly beyond the scope of either Western VM or TCVM. A patient with severe arthritis is unlikely to be turned into a champion field-trial athlete and or one with bad heart disease cured to the extent where medication will no longer be necessary.

How Long Will it take?

Though some cases respond very quickly, it usually takes more than one acupuncture session before results are evident. Although there are exceptions, most conditions take between 3 - 6 sessions performed once a week or month, and may require periodic "maintenance" sessions thereafter.

What will it cost?

Charges for the initial consultation include a discussion of TCVM and acupuncture for your pet, an initial consultation and TCVM examination and the first acupuncture treatment. It is hoped that you will have already read this introduction and feel comfortable with this type of therapy for your pet.

After the first treatment and depending on the condition, additional treatments and re-evaluations may be required. It is unlikely that your pet's medical condition will remain static. This means that we cannot predict or guarantee exactly what the length of treatment or intervals between treatments will be.

Included in the fees for each treatment is the use of any or all of the following:

- Dry needle (traditional acupuncture)
- Aquapuncture
- Electro-acupuncture

There may be additional costs for the use of more costly drugs such as Adequan® for arthritic conditions.

What does a TCVM treatment involve?

Dry needle-placement of individual sterile single use acupuncture needles. Depending on the case, these needles are usually left in place for 10-30 minutes. (In some cases the needle is placed in the acupuncture point and then immediately removed.) In most cases, the pet and owner relax together in one of our examination rooms. Some pets may even fall asleep or rest quietly during the session.

Aquapuncture-injection of a sterile solution into an acupuncture point to achieve a longer lasting effect. Most often, this is a red colored solution of Vitamin B12. For animals with a Vitamin B12 deficiency, this has the additional benefit of treating the deficiency. (Note: if B12 is used, you can expect that your pet's urine will be colored bright red as any extra B12 is excreted. This is completely safe and harmless.)

Electroacupuncture- by attaching a stimulator much like a TENS unit to specific needles and applying a pulsating low-intensity electric current to the body, a stronger and longer lasting effect can often be achieved.

What are the pet owner's responsibilities?

If you decide to have your pet treated with TCVM, it is expected that you will schedule the first three or four sessions at the completion of the initial consultation.

Between sessions, try to become aware of your pet's conditions and responses to therapy. Often an acupuncture session will cause the release of stagnant energy (Qi) and your pet may seem more tired for a day after the treatment. If you notice your pet seems more tired or weaker after a couple of days, this will often indicate some other problem developing that is unrelated to the acupuncture and your pet should be examined again immediately.

Your observations of your pet provide essential information that is used in arriving at a diagnosis and in the formulation of a treatment plan. Please pay attention to some specific areas and be prepared to let us know what you have observed at the beginning of each acupuncture session. Any changes from previous visits should be noted. A list of some of the important areas is included below.

Please do not discontinue or change any prescribed medications your pet is on without consulting us, even if your pet is improving.

Observation of your pet:

Overall energy level

Appetite

Water intake (how much and how does your pet drink)

Stool (character and frequency)

Vomiting, belching, passing gas

Cough or change in "voice"

Temperature preference (cool or warm)

Trouble sleeping, restlessness

Your pet's overall emotional state

Please note:

If your pet is not currently a patient here at Castro Valley Companion Animal Hospital and is being referred from another veterinary facility where he/she is currently a patient, we will need all of the pertinent medical records including laboratory results, radiographs (x-rays), etc., to help more effectively diagnose and treat your pet. Please make arrangements with your veterinarian to get those items to us, preferably before your first appointment.

Additionally, if your pet is referred to us from another doctor/hospital, we will not accept your pet for conventional (Western) Veterinary services for a period of not less than three (3) years.

**Castro Valley Companion Animal Hospital
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Castro Valley, CA 94546**

ACUPUNCTURE/TCVM CONSENT FORM

I am the owner (or agent for the owner) of the patient noted below, and I have the authority to execute consent for this procedure. I assume full financial responsibility for this animal.

I have been advised as to the nature of acupuncture treatments, and I understand that results cannot be guaranteed. I have read and understood all of the instructions above. I am also aware that unforeseen events resulting from the acupuncture sessions will not relieve me of any obligation to all reasonable costs incurred regarding this patient.

I understand that hospital support personnel may assist during the acupuncture sessions, as deemed necessary by the attending veterinarian.

Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____

Pet's Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Referring Veterinarian: _____