

Understanding Acupuncture

Acupuncture is best known as a part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with the first written record found in The Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine dated 4700 years ago. Acupuncture is a technique which involves the insertion of needles through the skin at specific points on the body in order to produce a desired healing effect.

TCM is based on observation and experimentation over many years. Ancient Chinese medical practitioners formulated explanations based on these observations and their understanding of physiology and anatomy. They theorized that the body has an energy force, called “Qi” (pronounced “chee”) running through it.

The Qi consists of all essential life activities which include the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical aspects of life. A person’s health is influenced by the flow of Qi in the body. If the flow of Qi is ineffective, unbalanced, or interrupted, illness may occur. Qi was theorized to travel through the body along specific pathways or ‘meridians’. Acupuncture points are specific locations along the meridians and stimulation of specific points is thought to restore balance of the flow of Qi.

Modern scientific methods continue to produce more insight into the validity and efficacy of acupuncture. New knowledge of the complex interactions of the nervous system with all the organ systems and immune responses continue to provide better explanation of how acupuncture works. While the Chinese explanation of moving Qi may not match our current understandings of neurophysiology and biochemistry, their observations of the effect of small needles at specific points affecting physiology, neurology, and health are being proven valid.

Many people recognize that acupuncture can be used for pain relief and musculoskeletal problems. However, stimulation of certain points may impact aspects of organ function, hormone regulation, and immune system actions making acupuncture an excellent option for helping to maintain your pet’s health and wellness.