

Fact Sheet

Acupuncture

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture may be used either by itself or in conjunction with conventional veterinary medicine to treat a wide variety of maladies.

In recent years, modern medicine & veterinary medicine have recognized acupuncture as an effective tool in treating many ailments in both people & animals. It may also help in minimizing the need for medications.



What does it involve?

Acupuncture involves the insertion of needles into specific points in the body to promote a desired healing effect. The needles are thought to stimulate & activate the body's innate repair mechanisms leading to changes in the nervous system, muscle tone, circulation, immune system, endocrine (hormone) system plus the respiratory, digestive & urogenital systems.

Often the animals become very relaxed.



How does it help?

Equine acupuncture can be used to treat a number of conditions in horses including:

- Musculoskeletal conditions (back & neck pain, lameness)
- Recurrent colic & digestive disturbances
- Respiratory disease (viral or allergic)
- Post viral fatigue
- Behavioural problems (often associated with pain)
- Chronic eye conditions

Can it be painful?

The insertion of the needles is virtually painless as the needles are very thin, but it can produce some discomfort, especially if the muscles are very tight and painful.

Sometimes a short-acting sedative is given to prevent the horse tensing up and so resisting the positive effects of acupuncture. Its action is not affected, only enhanced by sedation as the horse is more relaxed and tolerates the procedure better.



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Who can perform acupuncture?

By law, acupuncture can only be performed by a qualified veterinary surgeon that has undergone special training in the technique. This is because it is an invasive procedure that requires a thorough knowledge of veterinary anatomy and physiology.



Insurance

Often the cost of acupuncture can be claimed for on your insurance – please check with your own individual policy or with your insurance company, prior to embarking on a course of acupuncture.

Acupuncture as a preventative treatment

Acupuncture can have a valuable role as a preventative treatment. Fit competition horses taking part in a wide range of disciplines are prone to developing minor injuries that often go unnoticed. Eventually these build up and cause the horse to compensate by altering its way of moving and this makes it susceptible to more serious injury.

Regular examination and treatment throughout the season can catch these injuries at an early stage. By restoring normal blood supply and function to the muscles, they heal quickly and competition schedules are uninterrupted.



For further information, please contact your local VetPartners Equine Veterinary Practice on:

vetPartners

VetPartners Equine has a diverse range of practices and expertise within the group.

Together with our practices, our focus is on providing an excellent service to our equine clients. No two practices are the same, and we understand and embrace that independent spirit.