



What to do

If you are interested in learning more about acupuncture, herbal medicine or other modalities for your pet, e-mail or call Everhart. Please leave information about your pet's condition and the best time to reach you. The integrative Medicine Team will call you back to set up the initial appointment and provide a link for you to download and fill out our Integrative Medicine Health History Questionnaire. Once scheduled, this first meeting is quite involved, including review of your pet's health history, a complete physical examination, a Traditional Chinese Medicine examination, and your pet's first acupuncture treatment, Food Therapy recommendations and Tui Na techniques for you to do at home, so reserve 1 1/2 hours for this appointment.

Dr. Alison Ryan Key,
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist



It is my mission as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine to improve your pet's quality of life and longevity. I feel passionately that integrating different medical modalities allows your pet the best healthcare.

I became interested in Traditional Chinese Medicine during my undergraduate years at the University of Maryland while taking Tai Chi, a Chinese martial art that promotes relaxation and stress reduction. At the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, I was introduced to animal acupuncture during a complementary medicine course and further studied integrative medicine during my externships.

During my second year as a veterinarian, I completed intensive training offered by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS). This organization is devoted to preparing veterinarians to treat pets with TCM. I passed my IVAS final and, after completing acupuncture case studies and internship hours, I received my certification as a veterinary acupuncturist. I am currently completing my Master's of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine at the Chi Institute in Florida under the tutelage of Dr. Shen Xie, a doctor of veterinary medicine and a third generation practitioner of TCM. The Master's program includes study in Chinese medicinal herbs, Tui Na, Food Therapy, TCM theory and a thesis in the study of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine.

Integrative Medicine at Everhart



Providing Acupuncture,
Traditional Chinese
Veterinary Medicine,
and Other Modalities
to help and heal your
pet

What is TCM?



Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is a type of integrative medicine that has been used for thousands of years. There are multiple aspects of TCM including:

acupuncture, herbal therapy, food therapy, Qigong and Tui-na (a type of massage and skeletal manipulation). In combination, these treatment modalities form a powerful system of medicine that works to help the overall health of both people and animals. By integrating TCM with other types of medicine, the strengths of each system often work synergistically to improve your pets health and well being.

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body to bring about a healing effect. In TCM, the manipulation of these points corrects the flow of



Energy or “Qi” (pronounced “Chee”). This results in the relief of pain and disease symptoms. The mechanisms of how acupuncture works continue to be studied, however, scientific research has shown that acupuncture stimulates nerves, increases blood circulation, improves muscle relaxation, and increases the release of neurotransmitters and hormones.



When to Consider

Acupuncture and Herbal Modalities

Integrative Modalities can be considered as a treatment option for many disease processes, including:

- Musculoskeletal problems such as arthritis and disc disease
- Immune System disorders
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Reproductive problems
- Paralysis
- Skin problems

- Asthma
- Anxiety
- Any chronic disease

Acupuncture has not been proven to fix structural damage such as torn ligaments or broken bones. It can, however, relieve pain associated with these types of disorders and may speed up healing. Acupuncture can also help the athletic animal stay in top condition.



What to Expect

Multiple treatments are essential to help chronic problems or long standing illnesses. Often, weekly or biweekly treatments are necessary for 4-8 weeks. If acupuncture is an effective form of treatment for your pet’s problem, improvement should be noted during this time. After your pet has shown maximal improvement, acupuncture appointments are tapered until the greatest amount of symptom-free time elapses between visits. Some patients go for 3-6 months between treatments at this stage.

