**Holistic Options for Treating Seizures in Pets**

Seizures are commonly and effectively controlled with acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in dogs, cats, and other animals. In TCM, it is said that wind shakes the trees like seizures shake a body. The “tree” or “wood organ” in TCM is the liver.

Wind shaking the body is caused by several pathways in TCM. Seizure disorders may be differentiated into primary epilepsy, head trauma, metabolic or toxicity issues, infection, or brain tumors.

Mild seizures can disappear completely once dyes and colorings in food and treats are eliminated from the pet’s diet. Pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals applied in, on, or around the pet or house can lower the seizure threshold, making it easier for animals to have seizures.

Misuse of flea control can also result in seizures from the body’s reaction to chemicals. Additionally, pets can appear to be having seizures when they are infested with fleas when in reality they are just aggressively trying to itch a spot or bite at the jumping insects.

Patients who have a history of seizures that are now under control can see a resurgence of symptoms when they are boarded or receive vaccinations due to the physical and emotional stress of these events.

According to TCM, some foods that are “hot” or “jumpy”—such as shellfish, poultry, and lamb—make it easier to induce seizures. But foods that support the liver can be helpful in reducing bodily shaking.

To treat seizures holistically, “blood” or “yin” deficiencies as well as “internal wind” or “liver qi stagnation” can be tonified through herbal formulas, acupuncture, and food therapy. Some neurosurgeons have even created herbal mixes that help put at bay those seizures that are caused by brain tumors or trauma.

If your pet appears to be having a seizure, think over the animal’s history. Has there been a head injury, either recently or in the past? Has flea control recently been applied or the food changed? How old and what breed is the pet? Puppies should be evaluated for possible distemper, while senior pets are more likely to have developed brain tumors. Young adult animals are more often diagnosed with primary epilepsy, metabolic disorders, or environmental sensitivities.

Seizures can range from mild to extremely intense. Short-lasting, non-violent, repetitive movements known as fly-biting can still be diagnosed as seizures. Tremors, such as those induced by chemical exposure, are not usually referred to on this scale but they can be treated similarly. Vertigo or stroke disorders, such as vestibular syndrome, can also be susceptible to seizures. All of these types of seizures and neurological impairments can be treated with acupuncture and herbal therapies.