



ACUPRESSURE

AS PART OF AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO **DIABETES** IN PETS

By Amy Snow & Nancy Zidonis

Diabetes is very common in dogs and cats. An integrative approach to treatment is the best option, and acupressure can play an important role.

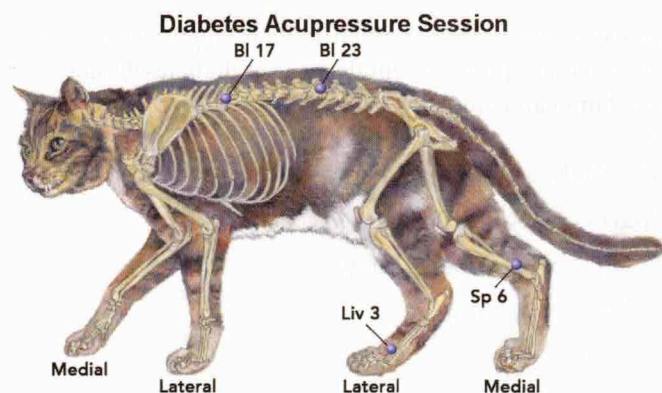
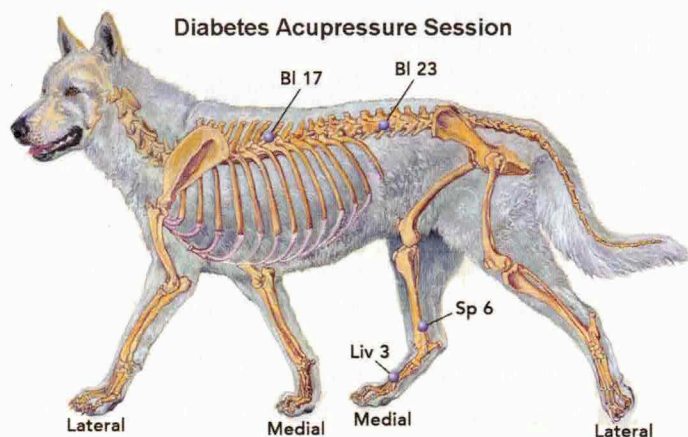
Diabetes in dogs and cats has reached epidemic proportions. There may not be a cure, but diabetic animals can live long and almost normal lives, thanks to tried and true treatment options offered by holistic veterinarians and complementary therapy providers. This article focuses on how acupressure can be used to address diabetes mellitus in dogs and cats.

HOW DIABETES DEVELOPS

Glucose, a form of sugar, is the essential energy source for the body's cells. Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas,

controls glucose levels in the animal's bloodstream. Insulin is also needed to transport the glucose from the blood to nourish and provide energy to the body's cells. If there's not enough insulin, too much glucose accumulates in the blood, causing hyperglycemia.

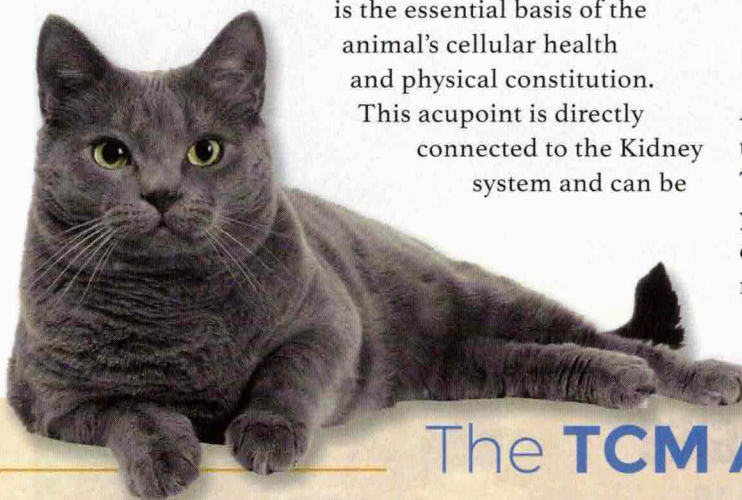
When glucose in the blood is elevated, insulin is not functioning properly and thus not transmitting glucose to the cells. The cells become starved while the sugars are flooding the organs, potentially leading to organ damage. Additionally, the glucose overflows into the urine, drawing a large quantity of body fluid, which is why diabetic animals often drink



ACUPRESSURE SESSION FOR A DIABETIC DOG OR CAT

The following acupoints have been used for thousands of years to address conditions like diabetes:

- *Bladder 17 (BI 17)* is the Influential point for blood. This acupoint's energetic action regulates and invigorates blood. Bladder 17 is located lateral to the seventh thoracic vertebra. That is, feel for this point just off the animal's spine at the level of the seventh thoracic vertebra.
- *Bladder 23 (BI 23)* supports Kidney yin, which is the essential basis of the animal's cellular health and physical constitution. This acupoint is directly connected to the Kidney system and can be



found just lateral to (away from) the dog or cat's spine between the second and third lumbar vertebrae.

- *Spleen 6 (Sp 6)* enhances Spleen/Pancreas function in creating nutrient-rich blood and facilitating blood flow, while also benefiting Liver and Kidney chi (life-promoting energy). Spleen 6 is found above the medial malleolus on the caudal border of the tibia. Trace your fingers above the inside of the animal's hock and press lightly against the tibia bone.
- *Liver 3 (Liv 3)* removes toxins from and invigorates the blood, and benefits metabolic disorders. On dogs and cats, Liver 3 is located between the second and third metatarsal on the hind paws at the junction of the metatarsophalangeal joint. Draw your finger up between the metatarsals until you feel the joint — that's Liver 3.

After holding the acupoints on both sides of your dog or cat, take a few minutes to relax and enjoy each other's company. These acupressure sessions go two ways: you are supporting your animal's health and well-being and he is offering his deep appreciation and ability to remain with you for many more years to come.

The TCM Approach to Diabetes

Acupressure is based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Ancient Chinese doctors used acupressure techniques to help manage metabolic and blood conditions and imbalances. According to TCM internal medicine theory, the Spleen/Pancreas organ system is responsible for the health of the blood. Other organ systems such as Liver and Kidney are also involved in metabolic and blood imbalances.

The Spleen/Pancreas system is considered the creators of blood, and the bioavailable nutrients in the blood. While

the Liver system consistently restores the health and vitality of blood, Kidney supports the substantive yin essence of the blood. These organ systems must function optimally and in concert to maintain a healthy balance of blood to nourish the entire body.

When a cat or dog is experiencing a blood and metabolic imbalance such as diabetes, the TCM approach is to use acupressure points to encourage the body to restore a healthy balanced blood flow.