

Supporting your cat's kidneys with **ACUPRESSURE**

By Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis

Regarded as "The Root of Life" in Chinese medicine, the kidneys are vital to your cat's health and survival. These acupressure sessions can help support and vitalize her kidney function.



Kidney disorders are very common in cats, especially as they get older. Fortunately, you can take steps to not only help prevent these problems from developing, but to support and strengthen kidney function in a cat who is already showing signs of disease. While diet and lifestyle are important factors, acupressure can also play a role in prevention and management.

FELINE KIDNEY DISORDERS

The difficulty with kidney disorders in cats is that they often present in ways that are similar to other disease, such as diabetes and aging issues. When kidney dysfunction becomes clinically recognizable and/or a blood test shows evidence of kidney dysfunction, you are then dealing with a condition that requires consistent management. Cats over the age of seven are increasingly more apt to develop renal disease. While there is no known cure for kidney insufficiency or failure, these disorders are no longer a death sentence for cats. Early detection and management are key to helping your cat live a long and comfortable life.

From a Western medicine perspective, a cat experiencing kidney disease may exhibit the following signs: poor appetite, extreme thirst, weight loss, dehydration, vomiting, frequent or reduced urination, bad breath, poor quality coat, sore mouth or mouth ulcers, nausea, pain, high blood pressure, diarrhea or constipation, bloody or cloudy urine, and lethargy.

Chinese medicine practitioners note that indicators of renal disease can also include shallow respiration (more exhalation than inhalation), wheezing, loose or loss of teeth, profuse clear urination, dull coat or sticky-looking fur, premature graying of the face, fragile bones, loss of hearing or other ear problems, and slow injury healing.

If your cat is exhibiting any of these indicators, consult your holistic or integrative veterinarian for a thorough checkup.

MANAGING YOUR CAT'S KIDNEY DISEASE — AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

Since your cat's survival depends on the health of her kidneys, it's best to use all

the resources available to help her live as long and as happily as she can. If your cat has kidney dysfunction, follow your veterinarian's recommendations and combine them with acupressure sessions to support her kidneys.

WESTERN VETERINARY CARE

Your veterinarian will perform two blood tests: blood-urea-nitrogen (BUN) and creatinine. She is testing for the level of nitrogen waste products from proteins that may be present in the cat's blood. Waste products are supposed to be flushed out of the cat's body when she urinates, or they will result in a toxic buildup leading to renal insufficiency or failure. These blood tests can also show low potassium or high phosphorus levels indicating advanced kidney disease.

Once the results of the blood tests are available, your veterinarian will use the International Renal Interest Society (IRIS) staging standard to determine your cat's stage of renal disease and the best course of treatment. In the case of acute renal failure (ARF), in which there's rapid deterioration of kidney function, it is possible for the disease

process to be slowed enough to be considered chronic renal failure (CRF).

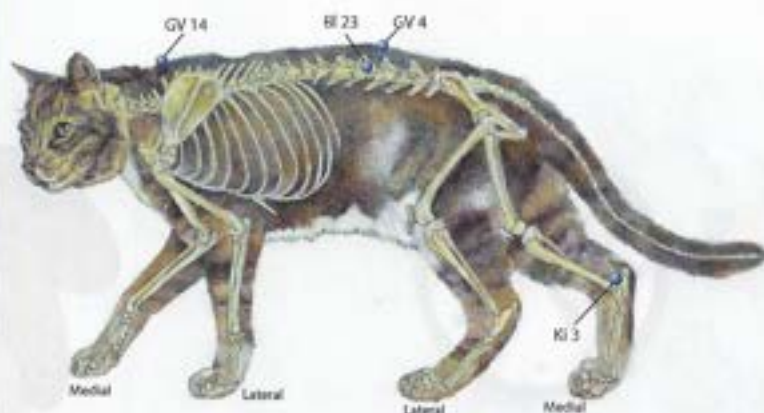
During the early stages of CRF, your vet will most likely recommend a diet low in proteins and encourage ways to increase your cat's water consumption. As CRF progresses over time, there are supplements and drugs that can help your cat continue with a good quality of life.

CHINESE MEDICINE CARE

In Chinese medicine, the goal is to avoid having your cat experience any kidney problems at all during her life. When she is young, you can help maintain the health of her kidneys by performing ongoing acupressure sessions that support their function — refer to the Kidney Support Acupressure Session chart below. Add a healthy, high quality diet and a toxin-free environment, plus a good balance of exercise, rest, mental stimulation, social interaction, and affection. These lifestyle enhancements will decrease the possibility of your cat falling prey to kidney disease.

If your cat already has a kidney disorder, specific acupressure points are known to increase the vitality of kidney function. By offering your cat the Kidney Function Acupressure Session twice a week (see chart top right) while working with your veterinarian, you will be giving your cat the gift of life.

Kidney Function Acupressure Session



Points	Location
BI 23	1.5 cun lateral to the caudal border of the spinous process of the 2 nd lumbar vertebra.
KI 3	Found in a depression between the medial malleolus of the tibia and the calcaneal tendon.
GV 4	On the dorsal midline, between the 2 nd and 3 rd lumbar vertebrae.
GV 14	On the dorsal midline between 7 th cervical and 1 st thoracic vertebrae.

Kidney Support Acupressure Session



Points	Location
LI 4	Found between the 1 st (dewclaw) and 2 nd metacarpal bones, on the medial side of the 2 nd metacarpal.
Sp 6	Located 3 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus on the caudal border of the tibia.
BI 23	1.5 cun lateral to the caudal border of the spinous process of the 2 nd lumbar vertebra.
KI 3	Found in a depression between the medial malleolus of the tibia and the calcaneal tendon.

Kidney function

In Chinese medicine, the kidneys are considered "The Root of Life", and are absolutely essential for good health and survival. Western medicine also regards healthy kidney function as necessary for survival. This means optimal kidney function is critical — not just for us, but for our cats as well.

The kidneys' job is more far-reaching than most of us know. They are responsible for regulating body fluids, producing red blood cells, moderating blood pressure, balancing salts, stimulating vitamin D production, as well as filtering and removing toxic waste. In addition, the kidneys produce hormones and other substances that regulate and influence heart rate, thirst, and hydration. Actually, all cellular functions are affected by kidney function.

