

# BOOST *your dog's* IMMUNITY *with* **ACUPRESSURE**

By Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis

*Maintaining a strong and balanced immune system in your dog is one of the keys to keeping him healthy. Learn how a simple acupressure session can help support his immunity.*

It's not an exaggeration to say that your dog's immune system is everything. His health depends on how well it protects him from infectious disease, as well as other pathogens and toxins lurking in the environment, in food, and even in your home. Any breakdown in the immune system means your dog's health can easily be compromised. Luckily, there are plenty of ways to support his immunity — including this simple acupressure session you can do at home.

The immune system has a huge job to do. Your dog is constantly being bombarded with allergens and toxins from plants, bugs, fertilizers, and household chemicals. Trips to the dog park or doggie daycare expose him to bacterial and viral pathogens. When his immune system is strong — great, no problem, he stays healthy. In fact, a moderate level of daily exposure to

The Thumb Technique works best on larger dogs and on the trunks and necks of medium-sized dogs. Gently place the soft tip of your thumb on the acupoint. Count to 20 very slowly, then move to the next point.



The Two-Finger Technique is a good choice when working on small dogs or the lower extremities on medium to large dogs. Place your middle finger on top of your index finger to create a little tent; lightly put the soft tip of your index finger on the acupoint and slowly count to 20.

allergy-causing irritants and other pathogens can actually make his immune system stronger. Your dog's natural resistance builds when challenged by exposure to pathogens.

Health issues arise when the dog's body is not able to resist pathogens because his immune system is weak. Allergies, respiratory problems, digestive issues, inflammation, and other immuno-

mediated diseases are all due to a compromised immune system, according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

## TCM IS ALL ABOUT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

In TCM, every health issue goes back to the body's ability to resist external pathogens and maintain internal balance. The key word here is "balance". Health is maintained when chi, the essential life-promoting force, flows in a harmoniously balanced fashion throughout the body. Any disruption to the smooth and balanced flow of both chi and blood interrupts the balance of the body.

When there's an imbalance of chi and blood, the health of the animal is compromised. Chi is unable to vitalize the body, and blood can't moisten and nourish it. This, in turn, leads to an inability of the internal organs to





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function properly. A domino effect occurs in which the immune system becomes weakened and your dog becomes vulnerable to pathogens.

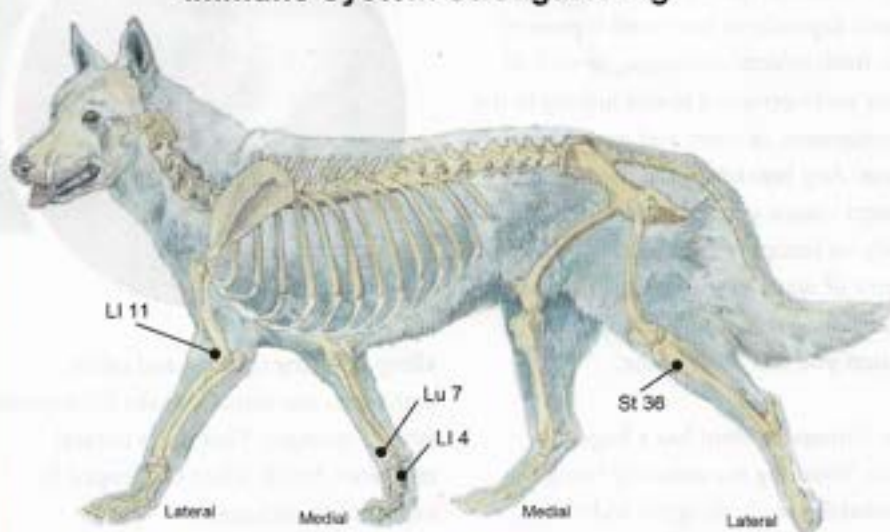
Chinese medicine practitioners focus on restoring and supporting a balanced, harmonious flow of chi and blood. Chi and blood flow along energetic pathways, or meridians, throughout the dog's body. Along these meridians are pools of energy called "acupoints". We can influence the flow of chi and blood by stimulating specific acupoints.

For instance, the Lung is responsible for creating and dispersing Protective or Defensive chi, also called Wei chi. Protective chi is immune system chi and defends the dog from external pathogens, such as Cold or Heat, that can enter the body and disrupt the balanced flow of chi and blood. We can select certain acupoints, known after thousands of years of clinical observation, that enhance the Lung's capacity to perform its role in strengthening the immune system.

## IMMUNE-STRENGTHENING ACUPRESSURE SESSION

The only difference between acupressure and acupuncture is that in acupressure you don't use needles to stimulate acupoints; you can use your thumb or index finger. By following the accompanying acupressure chart for

## Immune System Strengthening



### Point

### Location

Lu 7

Located above the styloid process, 1.5 cun above the crease of the wrist.

LI 4

Between the first (dewclaw) and 2<sup>nd</sup> metacarpal bones, on the medial side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> metacarpal.

LI 11

Lateral aspect of thoracic limb, at lateral end of cubital crease. Find by flexing the elbow.

St 36

3 cun below St 35, one finger-breadth lateral to tibial crest, in lateral portion of the cranial tibial muscle.

Immune System Strengthening, you can support your dog's health, help him maintain a balanced flow of chi and blood, and benefit his immune system.

Each of the four acupoints selected for this session are commonly used to boost the immune system. Remember to stimulate these points on both sides of your dog's body.

### Lung 7 (Lu 7), Lie Que, Broken

**Sequence** – Regulates and supports Lung function, enhancing Protective Wei chi in benefiting the immune system.

### Large Intestine 4 (LI 4), He Gu, Adjoining

**Valley** – This point is known to directly boost the function of Protective chi.

### Large Intestine 11 (LI 11), Qu Chi, Pond in the Curve

– LI 11 has many

energetic properties; one is to benefit immuno-stimulation by energetically building Protective Wei chi while also clearing the Lungs of excess fluids.

**Stomach 36 (St 36), Zu San Li, Leg Three Miles** – St 36 also has a tremendous number of properties and is the go-to acupoint for metabolic issues as well as enhancing Lung function and Protective chi.

These four acupoints are powerful allies for making sure your dog's immune system is up to the job of protecting him from illness. Regular acupressure sessions, along with a healthy diet and lifestyle, means you can relax and enjoy yourself when you're out and about with your dog, because you know his body is strong and healthy.