

Chiropractic Care for Your Pet

The goal of animal chiropractic care is helping the animal feel its best without the use of drugs and other pharmaceutical products. Chiropractic care focuses on restoring proper motion to the spinal column and limbs. This helps the nervous system work optimally, promotes healthy organ function, and aids the peak performance of connective tissues (muscles, tendons, ligaments). Chiropractic care is an important part of the wellness healthcare of an animal.

Evaluation

A chiropractic evaluation involves a thorough examination of the animal. First, I analyze the posture of an animal. How is it standing? Does it bear weight equally on all four legs? Is the musculing of the animal symmetrical on both sides? Next, I watch the animal move and analyze its gait. Is the animal moving balanced or is it stiff going one direction versus the other? Is the animal stiff or sore on a limb? Then, I place my hands on the animal and palpate for tight muscles or areas of soreness. Is a joint stiff or is there abnormal swelling anywhere? A very important part of the examination is motion palpation of the vertebral column and limbs. If a vertebral subluxation is found on the motion palpation then a chiropractic adjustment is performed.

What is a vertebral subluxation?

A joint subluxation in veterinary medical terms is much different than a subluxation in chiropractic terms. Merriam-Webster defines a medical subluxation, as a “partial dislocation (as of one of the bones in a joint).” The exact definition depends on the anatomical part that is involved. A chiropractic subluxation is a spinal misalignment and the misalignment is small, barely millimeters. The spinal misalignment leads to joint dysfunction which can be too much motion, or not enough motion. The improper motion at the vertebral spaces can lead to nerve dysfunction where the nerve is being pinched. This causes improper firing of nerve signals and can lead to tight, sore, painful muscles.

So what does a chiropractic adjustment involve?

It is a short lever (close to the misalignment) high velocity controlled thrust by a hand or an instrument at a specific location with a specific line of drive. One very important aspect of the adjustment is that one joint is adjusted at a time. This is for the safety of the animal and also the safety of the practitioner doing the adjustment. I am often asked, “How can anyone adjust a large animal such as a horse, cow or a large dog?” I reply, “One joint at a time!” With animal chiropractic care, the practitioner is not adjusting the entire animal at one time, but rather they are adjusting the relative position of two bones at a joint articulation.

Who We Serve

In my animal chiropractic practice, I see typically three types of patients: older, geriatric animals, athletic performance animals, and injured or post-surgery patients. I often see geriatric patients that have neck, back, and joint pain due to arthritis or other chronic conditions. My goal is to help them feel and move better, so that they have more good days than bad days in their golden years.

The athletic patients often come to me if their performance starts to decline. Perhaps they are refusing jumps, dropping bars, moving stiffly going one direction versus the other, or acting grumpy when being saddled. If I can examine and treat a patient early when the signs first begin to show, I

have a better chance of getting them feeling and moving better before that small soreness turns into a major lameness.

I also see injured patients to help with their rehabilitation. For example, if an animal is injured in its left hind leg, they will often compensate with the front limbs, neck, back, and/or the other hind limb. By realigning the spine and balancing the body with a chiropractic treatment, the animal may have a faster and more complete recovery.

Why Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care plays a valuable role in the maintenance of an animal's overall health and performance. While there is a time and a place to use more traditional approaches to veterinary care, chiropractic can help the animal move more balanced, release tight nerves, and optimize the function of many organ systems in the body. Chiropractic care can be another important part of your animal's wellness program to a healthy life.

Interested in Learning More About How Chiropractic Care Can Help Your Pet? Contact Us!