

# VETERINARY MEDICINE TODAY

## The Companion Therapy Laser System

The doctors and staff of the Kenosha Animal Hospital are proud to introduce the newest technology available for companion animals to our area. It was recently approved by the FDA for use on animals (as well as with humans) to provide drug-free, surgery-free and pain-free relief through the use of a laser.

LASER is an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. By definition, a LASER is any device which can be made to produce or amplify electromagnetic radiation in the wavelength range from 180nm to 1 mm, primarily by the process of controlled stimulated emission. Lasers are classified into different categories (Class I – Class IV), depending on their power output and potential to cause body harm if used inappropriately. We live in a world dependant on lasers, often used in manufacturing, construction, printing, reading bar codes, playing music, or surgery.

Recently a new and important use was researched and developed for use with humans and animals. This technology, known as Laser Therapy, uses laser light at a specific wavelength and power to stimulate damaged tissue cells for faster healing and repair. The science behind this novel therapy is fascinating and although the concept is simple, it has been around since the beginning of time. Two very basic examples are photosynthesis in the plant and Vitamin D conversion in our skin using sunlight.

With all these benefits, people often wonder, “Does it hurt?” The answer is no, if it is used properly. It actually feels like gentle warm heat to the patient, which is often comforting, especially with soreness and inflammation; but the real action is more complex, occurring at the cellular level. This activity is known as “photobiomodulation” and “photobiostimulation;” simply put,

physical and chemical changes made within the tissue cells using a light source.

Anytime there is an injury within the body, regardless of location, Laser Therapy can be of great value. Depending on the power setting applied, it can be focused anywhere from the superficial layers of the skin to the far deeper tissues, including bone, when a higher wattage is employed. I'm extremely excited with the results that I've already seen with my patients, and for the endless possibilities that exist with our ability to help them through their recovery from surgery. Some of the many disorders that I have already treated patients with include, osteoarthritis, injured ligaments and tendons, spinal back pain, ear infections, anal gland diseases, skin infections and other skin disorders such as chronic lick sores, bladder infections, stomatitis and gingivitis (inflammation of the mouth and gums), traumatic wounds, and for post surgical pain relief and accelerated healing.

As you consider treatment plans for your pet, this now gives you another alternative to discuss with your veterinarian. It can be used in conjunction with other therapies, and in some cases, can be a truly stand-alone therapy. In most situations (except in the some of the chronic, long-standing disorders) it can often provide immediate results with only one or two treatments; and most importantly, without any dangerous side effects.

Next month, I'll delve into the science behind this fascinating technology.

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