

Alternative Veterinary Medicine

According to a 1999 survey by the American Animal Hospital Association, 31 percent of pet owners have used some form of alternative medicine for their pets. Many Atlanta veterinarians mix and match traditional and alternative treatments to best prevent acceleration of chronic disorders, such as arthritis, and treat full-blown disease processes.

Susan Wynn, D.V.M., runs The Wynn Clinic for Therapeutic Alternatives, a small animal clinic, based out of the Greater Atlanta Veterinary Medical Group in Marietta. The medical group includes an internal medicine specialist, chiropractor and a doctor of animal behavior.

"I have a special interest in acupuncture, nutrition and herbal medicine," Wynn said. "I concentrate on those areas and like to work in conjunction with people's regular veterinarians."

In general, pet owners drawn to alternative modalities want to prevent problems and maintain health with nutrition. "I can spend much more time educating a patient than regular vets can," she said.

While Wynn utilizes herbs to treat a variety of disorders, she does not believe they are appropriate for every situation. "I use them for viral infections, but not bacterial infections," she said. "Many times conventional drugs cause unwanted side effects."

Keep in mind that some herbs humans safely can consume may prove toxic to various species of animals; pet owners should always check with a veterinarian before administering any herbal remedy to four-legged pals.

