

# Laser Therapy

**By Dr. Hannah Bigelow, DVM**

Laser therapy has become popular in both human and veterinary medicine. Although only recently coming into popularity, laser therapy has been used for over 40 years and thousands of studies are available on the efficacy of this treatment modality. At Animal Care Center, we have two types of veterinary lasers- Carbon Dioxide and Class IV. Although both types of lasers use light energy, they work in very different ways to achieve similar goals.

Carbon Dioxide lasers are used in soft tissue surgical procedures. This type of laser uses a highly focused beam of light energy to remove/cut through (ablate) tissues and seal off capillaries. The benefits of using CO<sub>2</sub> lasers include reduced bleeding, pain, and infection, which results in reduced recovery time. These lasers also aid physicians by allowing better visualization of surgical field and vastly improved control/precision which reduces surgical time.

Class IV lasers use a beam of light to penetrate deep into tissues (without causing damage) to deliver photons (packets of light energy) to promote healthier cells. The light energy stimulates tissue repair, cell growth, stem cells, and has anti-inflammatory effects. These lasers are used for both chronic (degenerative joint disease, hip dysplasia, inflammatory bowel disease, lick granulomas, etc) and acute conditions (snake bites, wounds/cuts, tooth extractions, surgical incisions, etc).

Laser therapy is becoming more and more available throughout the veterinary field. Laser is a great option for reducing pain and inflammation while speeding healing. For more information, please schedule an appointment with your vet to discuss how laser therapy may be appropriate for your pet.

