

## Therapeutic Class IV Laser

Laser is simply a specific wavelength of energy that is focused into a narrow beam, and then used to impact a distant target. This technology is used today across a wide range of applications in many fields – medical and non-medical. In veterinary medicine, the surgical laser has been used for many years. A surgical laser uses a high energy, short wavelength beam to create an incision and it has benefits in many surgical procedures. We've been successfully using surgical laser at Ferry Farm Animal Clinic in specific applications for many years.

More recently, a longer wavelength and lower energy form of laser, called Therapeutic Class IV Laser Therapy has been introduced in veterinary medicine. Class IV laser is NOT used for surgery, but as a tool to relieve pain, reduce swelling, and speed tissue healing through a process called photobiostimulation. The treatment is not painful; the patient feels a sensation of gentle warmth in the treated area. The treatment time varies with the condition and size of the area treated, but most treatments take just a few minutes to perform. There are very few side effects and most patients tolerate the treatment very well.



Class IV laser therapy was approved by the FDA in 2005, and as of this writing is in use in over 3000 veterinary practices in the United States. It is used in human medicine for physical therapy, rehabilitation, wound care, and sports medicine programs. Many collegiate and professional sports teams use class IV laser as part of their treatment and rehabilitation program for sports injuries. In veterinary medicine, many acute and chronic conditions have been shown to benefit from laser therapy. This list includes conditions like wounds, abscesses, soft tissue injuries like sprains and strains, venomous bites, dermatitis, lick granulomas, chronic ear

problems, and osteoarthritis, among many others. Laser is generally used as an adjunct to other therapy, such as surgery or standard medical treatments. Using laser often allows for a reduction in the amount of medication used for chronic diseases like osteoarthritis. Acute conditions may use laser treatments for a set time period to speed the healing process, whereas chronic conditions often require an initial period of frequent treatments followed by a less frequent maintenance protocol.

We introduced this technology at Ferry Farm Animal Clinic early in 2013, and have been pleased with the benefits seen in our patients. Let one of our doctors discuss the benefit of therapeutic Class IV laser for your pet.