

Tips for Feline Anxiety-Free Veterinary Visits

Preparing for your cat's visit:

- Take your cat's carrier out and keep it in an area of your home where your cat spends the majority of his or her time. Do this at least 2 days prior to your scheduled veterinary visit. This will allow your kitty to safely explore his or her kennel/carrier and become more comfortable and familiar with it before his appointment.
- Purchase **Feliway spray** and spray inside of carrier and/or on bedding in carrier. Start spraying 2 days prior to your visit (recommend to spray carrier once or twice daily). Can also place smelly treats (seaweed flakes, catnip, etc) inside the carrier to coax your kitty to explore, and become comfortable with, the inside.
- When getting ready for transport, keep your carrier covered (carrier covers can be purchased for this use, or you can use a light blanket, towel or sheet). This gives your cat a dark, quiet place. Also make sure that your kitty is safely secured in your vehicle. If you do NOT have a carrier, consider using a pillowcase or a cat sack to provide a dark, quiet transport.
- Play relaxing, calm music during your drive. Classical, harp or nature sounds work best! This can help reduce unfamiliar and loud outside noises (cars, honking, etc.). Don't play it too loud, or too soft. Too loud can be stressful, too soft won't help drown outside noises.
- If you have a very anxious or worried cat, consider purchasing a **Thundershirt**. Thundershirts are scientifically proven to reduce anxiety by providing your pet with a sense of security and safety, similar to swaddling an infant.
- You may give us a call a day or two before your appointment and request to pick up anti-anxiety medication. For cats, our fear-free medication protocol consists of oral Gabapentin, as it is safe and usually effective. This can be given about 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment. A "Happy Shot" (injectable sedation) can be given during your appointment, if the oral therapy is ineffective for your kitty.
- Bring Fluffy in HUNGRY! Treats are a wonderful way for our veterinary team to develop bonds and trust, distract during procedures and praise your cat for a job well done! Feel free to bring in your kitty's favorite snack, or we can use some of our own! *Please make sure to inform your veterinary team of any food allergies your pet may have ahead of time!*
- Do not put your carrier on the ground/floor when you arrive to your visit. Cats enjoy being up high. Keep their carrier on a counter, bench seat, table, etc.
- Once you get into your exam room, open your cat's carrier and leave the door open. Allow your cat some time to come out on his/her own prior to attempting to take them from the carrier yourself. Allow your cat to roam and explore their settings/surroundings.

Remember that animals have amazing senses, many that are much more developed than our own, and our dogs and cats can feed off of our energy as well. Keeping calm and stress-free during visits yourself will help your dog and cat to feel more secure and relaxed. If you are stressed-your pet will be stressed.