



Fear Free Tips For Bringing Your Cat To The Vet



Before Your Cat's Appointment:

1. **Get your cat comfortable with the carrier:** Keep it out at home with bedding, familiar scents, and treats or toys to make it a safe, positive space.
2. **Practice short sessions:** Encourage your cat to enter the carrier on their own, close the door briefly, and gradually increase time. Carry in your arms, not by the handle, to reduce stress and improve stability.
3. **Reduce pre-visit stress:** Keep your routine normal on the day of the appointment. When it is time for your cat's appointment, avoid chasing or forcing your cat into the carrier. Use treats or gentle guidance instead!
4. **Bring your cat hungry (if safe):** Skip a meal or feed only half of a meal prior to the appointment. This helps your cat stay motivated by treats given at the clinic. You are welcome to bring their own food or treats to maintain familiarity. If your cat has health concerns (such as diabetes), please consult us first.
5. **Use calming aids:** Pheromone sprays or collars, and calming medications and supplements.



Traveling To The Clinic:



Ask us for recommendations!

1. **Keep your cat secure:** Place the carrier on a flat surface in the car (preferably the floor or secured with a seatbelt).
2. **Limit visual stress:** Cover the carrier with a light towel to reduce visual stress and muffle unfamiliar sounds.
3. **Drive calmly, talk softly and play calming music:** Slow acceleration, smooth turns, and a low voice help maintain relaxation. Classical music or pet-specific calming playlists can also help to reduce stress.
4. **Remain Calm:** Pets can sense and mirror their owners emotions. Therefore, try to move slowly, speak calmly and give yourself lots of time so you are not rushing.
5. **Temperature matters:** Ensure the temperature inside the car is appropriate for the temperature outside. Prior to putting the carrier in, warm or cool car accordingly.



When Arriving At The Clinic:

1. **Avoid the waiting room or sit in cat designated areas:** Call the clinic upon arrival and ask to wait in the car until the exam room is ready. Alternatively, sit away from other pets, especially dogs. Keep the carrier covered and up off the floor.
2. **Do not open the carrier in the waiting room:** Please keep your cat in its carrier in the waiting room. Only remove it in the exam room. For safety, do not carry on a leash or in your arms.
3. **Speak softly and avoid sudden movements.**



While At The Clinic And During The Exam:

1. **Allow low-stress handling techniques:** Our veterinary staff will use slow movements, gentle touch, treats, distraction techniques and will work to examine your cat where they are most comfortable (floor, table, or in your arms).
2. **Advocate for your cat's comfort:** Tell the team what areas your cat does not like being touched, any past negative experiences, and whether your cat fears specific people or certain equipment.
3. **Reward frequently:** Offer small treats or soothing pets for calm behaviors throughout the exam.
4. **Ask your clinic if they use pheromones:** We can use calming pheromones to help make your cat more comfortable during their visit. Please let us know ahead of time if you would like this used.
5. **Ask about pre-visit medications if needed:** If your cat becomes anxious or you feel they could benefit from additional support, calming medications can make visits safer, kinder, and less scary.



After the Visit:

1. **Provide a Quiet Recovery Space:** Let your cat come out of the carrier on their own in a calm, familiar area. Keep other pets and noise to a minimum.
2. **Watch for Changes:** It's normal for cats to be quiet or tired afterward. Monitor for any unusual behavior and contact the clinic if you're concerned.
3. **Reinforce Positive Associations:** Offer treats, playtime, or affection once your cat settles. Leave the carrier out again so it doesn't become a "one-time scary object."

Be patient and consistent. Positive carrier and vet experiences make trips easier over time. Stay calm and plan ahead!



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