



Preparing Your Cat for a Veterinary Visit: A Fear Free® Approach

Visiting the veterinarian can be stressful for cats, but with the right preparation, you can help reduce their fear, anxiety, and stress. Follow these steps to make the experience smoother:

A Few Days Before the Visit

Carrier Fear Desensitization, Handling, and Environment

- ☐ Place the carrier in a familiar area of your home and leave it open. Add soft bedding, treats, and toys to make it inviting.
- ☐ Encourage your cat to explore or rest inside by rewarding them with treats or praise.
- ☐ Spray a calming pheromone (like Feliway or bSerene) in the carrier & in areas where your cat spends time. Do this daily leading up to the visit.
- ☐ Gently touch your cat's paws, ears, and mouth whilst rewarding with treats to create positive associations. **Call for advice if this doesn't go well.**
- ☐ Avoid loud noises, sudden changes, or stressful activities in the days leading up to the visit if possible.

The Day Before the Visit

Preparations

- ☐ Confirm the appointment time and gather any paperwork or medical history needed. **Consider when your pet normally eats and prepare their feeding schedule to align with your appointment the following day. Consult with us if you are unsure how to best proceed.**
- ☐ Ensure the carrier is clean and ready to go. Add a blanket or towel with your cat's scent for comfort. Continue with treats & positive reinforcement.
- ☐ Spray the carrier with a calming pheromone 15–20 minutes before placing your cat inside to help acclimate them for their journey the next day.

On the Day of the Visit

Meal Planning, Emotional Prep, & Transport

- ☐ Withhold food (unless medically/behaviorally indicated) or align meals so that your cat is at least moderately hungry.
- ☐ **Bring their favorite treat(s).** Having a low-value and high-value treat can be helpful. We will have a variety on our end as well.
- ☐ Stay calm & get into your best headspace. Your emotions can affect your cat. Use a soothing voice when interacting with them & continue normal routines.
- ☐ Gently place your cat in the carrier, using treats to encourage them if necessary. Cover the carrier with a lightweight towel that has been sprayed with a calming pheromone. **Place them on the ground behind the driver or passenger seat.**
- ☐ Drive Smoothly. Keep the car quiet and maintain a smooth ride. Play calming music if it helps. Avoid sudden stops or loud noises.

Arriving at the Veterinary Hospital

Arrival Recommendations

- ☐ Carry the carrier securely and avoid swinging it. **Hold it from the bottom to keep it steady.** Keep your cat away from dogs or other animals in the waiting area and proceed directly to the feline reception area. **Delay entering the building if a dog is visible through the window.**
- ☐ Let the staff know you've arrived and inform them if your cat is especially anxious.
- ☐ Place the carrier on one of the tables provided (not the floor) and keep it covered until it's time for the exam. We will help you from there!



By following these steps, you can help make your cat's visit to the veterinarian a low-stress experience for both of you!

