

Tips for Canine Anxiety-Free Veterinary Visits

Preparing for your dog's visit:

- Bring Fido in HUNGRY! Treats are a wonderful way for our veterinary team to develop bonds and trust, distract during procedures and praise your dog or puppy for a job well done! Feel free to bring in your dog'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!*
- Just as with your kitties, it is shown that playing calming music (such as classical, harp or nature sounds) helps your dog to relax and also drowns out background noise.
- If you have a very anxious or worried dog, 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.
- Always keep your dog on a leash, and close to you, when coming to the veterinary office. This provides control and safety between you and your dog. **Remember-** your dog may be friendly, but other dogs may not be!
- Consider looking into a car diffuser in a calming scent such as lavender. This can benefit both you and your dog!
- Consider purchasing and using a **DAP (Adaptil) collar**. Adaptil collars are activated by your dog's body heat and releases calming pheromones constantly. *Keep in mind that this method typically requires at least 2-5 days after the start of wearing the collar to achieve desired effects.
- You may give us a call a day or two before your appointment and request to pick up anti-anxiety medication. For dogs, our fear-free medication protocol consists of oral Alprazolam, 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 dog.
- If your dog has sound anxiety, consider looking into **Mutt Muffs** for sound reduction.
- One of the best things you can do for your puppy or dog is to make them accustomed to walking on a leash and riding in a car.
- Practice putting the leash on and then taking it off, do this several times. If your dog wears a harness, allow them to wear the harness (supervised!) for a couple hours each day so it becomes familiar to them. You can practice leash walking them around your backyard until they become use to the leash.
- Daily walks are recommended not only for optimal health, but also for proper training and socialization! *ALWAYS make sure your puppy or dog is fully vaccinated and protected!*
- Ensure that their collar and/or harness are properly fitted and snug so that there is no risk of them slipping out of them and getting loose.
- Take your puppy or dog on car rides for many different reasons, not only to go to the veterinary office. Short car rides to the gas station, dog park, picking your kids up from school or other activities or even just quick rides around the neighborhood. This will help teach your dog that car rides can be fun and exciting and will reduce anxiety, stress and even motion sickness in the car.
- Make sure your dog is safely secured in your vehicle. This is not only safe for you, but also for your dog. Having a safe place for your dog to sit or lay in your vehicle will also offer them security.

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.