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Preparing Your Pet for a Vet Visit

Coming into the vet practice can be a daunting experience for your pet. The visit begins right from the moment you attach the lead to your dog or place your cat in their travel carrier. Therefore, it is important that we as a collective make the experience as stress-free as possible. This handout will go through what we can do to help our pets when planning a vet visit.

Dogs

First and foremost we always recommend that our canine patients are socialised within the veterinary environment. This includes popping in at appropriate times for a treat and to say hello. Your veterinary team are trained to appropriately approach dogs depending on their emotional stability. If your dog is particularly struggling, our colleagues will not force interaction. Visiting us for a treat creates positive association and teaches your dog that not every visit is scary and involves having injections or being handled.

Allow your dog to be in a relaxed state of emotion. Try not to arrive too early for appointments as this can give your dog time to become overstimulated in the waiting room. If you do arrive early, you can make us aware of your arrival and wait in the car or outside if the weather permits.

We recommend using pheromone therapy to help calm your dog. These can come in the form of collars which stay on and last 4 weeks or you can get a spray and spray bedding at home and in the car. Both can be purchased in practice.

If your dog is reactive and generally in a very anxious/nervous emotional state, talk to your vet prior to your appointment to see if there is anything that can help medically before your visit.

Cats

First of all, it is important that your cat is desensitised to their carrier. This means creating a positive association with the carrier by having it out at times where a vet visit is **not** likely to happen and placing treats (and catnip) and toys inside. If we only ever get the carrier out when a vet visit is needed, this will create a negative association and you may find it difficult to get your cat inside, which is likely to cause stress.

Choose the right size carrier, making sure it's hard for stability and big enough to fit your cat and their bedding inside. Ideally with no windows or too many gaps as this will worry your cat, it needs to mimic somewhere they can hide. Carrier blanket covers can be brought for more "privacy" if needed.

We recommend also using pheromone therapy to help appease your cat throughout the journey. Feliway have a spray called Feliway Classic which has the facial pheromone and helps calm felines. You can spray this 20 minutes before travel, onto their bedding inside the carrier.

If your cat is reactive and generally in a very anxious/nervous emotional state, talk to your vet prior to your appointment to see if there is anything that can help medically before your visit.

Hopefully these tips may help ease the stress of coming into the veterinary practice, please get in touch if you have any further questions.