



## Preparing for your cat's visit to the veterinarian

**The stress begins long before you walk through the veterinarian's front door!** Does your kitty run and hide the first time he sees you get the pet carrier out of the garage? It's been sitting out there since last year's visit, hasn't it? Does it have dust and spider webs inside? Did you clean it with some cat-offensive lemon-scented multi-purpose spray before you wrestled him in there? Once you get in the car, Kitty is so stressed and offended that he's crying - all the way there. He does quiet down long enough to vomit his breakfast. You take a quick turn into the parking lot and now it's all over his feet. *Meow. Meow.* By the time you walk in, you feel like you've wrestled a miniature horse and tortured your best friend...and the appointment hasn't even begun. There has to be a better way!

**Pet carriers should be more like a piece of furniture than a torture chamber:** Store your carrier in commonly used areas of the house at all times. Fill it with a favorite blanket or toys inside. Let it smell like home. Place food, treats, or catnip in or near the carrier. Encourage your pet to go into carrier and reward him with treats. This will allow the kitty to be comfortable with being around or in the carrier when it's needed for travel.

**Spray the carrier and/or vehicle with Pheromones:** Pheromone is a substance that elicits a reaction in a member of the same species. It has been found that using Feliway pheromone spray can help to calm cats when used correctly. These sprays can be purchased at most pet stores. Spray your pet carrier and the blanket you put inside. You can even spray your car interior to help kitty feel safe and secure. Allow 10-15 minutes after spraying before your cat enters the carrier or vehicle.

**Allow 5-10 minutes for adjustments:** It takes a cat 5-10 minutes to become adjusted to their new surroundings. Make sure your cat is resting and comfortable in his carrier before moving him to the next environment. When you arrive at the hospital, keep his carrier on an elevated surface (like our counter or a waiting room chair) rather than the floor to help him feel safe and comfortable. Cats are predators who feel most secure looking *down* on their environment.

**Place a towel or blanket over the carrier:** Kitty doesn't need or want to see what's going on outside while in his carrier. Cover it with a towel or blanket from the moment you leave home until the moment you return. This really helps if you walk in the veterinary office and there is a dog in the waiting area, too. You can also spray the towel or blanket with your Pheromone spray.

**Allow extra time:** for travel and arriving. If you are in a rush, your cat will become more stressed.

**Calm car rides:** Keep kitty's carrier in a secure location. The floorboard behind a seat is a good choice. Make sure there is a no slip surface inside the carrier. Accelerate and take turns slowly. Avoid sudden braking. Avoid loud music and make sure your vehicle is at a comfortable temperature.

**Bring your cat's favorite things:** Bring plenty of treats from home that you know your cat loves. In fact, fasting him before a car ride will make him LESS likely to become nauseous and MORE likely to be hungry for those treats. Does your kitty love to be brushed? Bring that slicker along and brush him while you wait for his appointment. He'll love it!

If your pet is not adjusting well to travel or to visits to the veterinarian with these recommendations, anti-nausea or anti-anxiety medications can be prescribed in some cases. This should be discussed with the veterinarian prior to or during your next visit if you think it is necessary.