



Preparing for your dog's visit to the veterinarian

The stress begins long before you walk through the veterinarian's front door! You and your dog hop in the car for a drive and he's all smiles and riding shotgun. You take a left turn, then a right turn, and somehow he already knows where he's going. The dreaded veterinarian! You're once happy little co-pilot is suddenly drooling, maybe barking, in protest. You turn into the veterinarian's parking lot and your windows are steamed up from heavy panting. He doesn't want to get out of the car and you practically drag him through the front door. What happened? Your little buddy is acting like a different dog and the appointment hasn't even begun. There has to be a better way!

Consider fasting your dog prior to his visit, especially if he drools or vomits for car rides. An empty belly is less likely to be upset by a car ride and stress. Plus he'll be hungry for all the treats we would like to give him during his visit. We will be using treats as motivation as well as reward, so he really doesn't need breakfast today!

Allow extra time: for travel and arriving. If you rush, your dog will become more stressed. Spending a few minutes in our waiting area (or yard) will help you both relax before his appointment.

Spray carrier/vehicle/bandana with Pheromones: Pheromone is a substance that elicits a reaction in a member of the same species. It has been found that using Adaptil pheromone spray can help to calm dogs when used correctly. You can purchase spray Pheromones at the pet store. Allow 10-15 minutes after spraying before your pet enters a sprayed carrier or vehicle. Bandanas can also be sprayed and placed around your dog's neck.

Calm car rides: Keep your pet in a secure location. The floorboard behind a seat is a secure location. Make sure there is a no slip surface. Consider placing a crate in vehicle or purchasing a seatbelt harness. Accelerate and take turns slowly. Avoid sudden braking and loud music in the vehicle and make sure it's a comfortable temperature. Offer some treats and reassurance during the car ride. If you're worried, we guarantee he'll be worried.

Bring favorite treats/toys/blankets: Bring plenty of treats from home that you know your dog loves. Does he have a favorite toy or blanket? Bring it along for a touch of security and scent from home. Does he love to be brushed? Bring that slicker along and brush him while you wait for his appointment. He'll love it!

Provide the opportunity to relieve himself prior to when you leave your home and again when you arrive at the veterinarian's office. Having a full bladder is uncomfortable and can escalate stress.

Happy Visits: You can provide a positive experience by bringing your pet for a "happy visit". Ask our staff what time of day is best for this. Visiting the veterinary office simply to say hello, get a few treats and a lot of love will definitely help your dog to become more relaxed for his next visit. Feel free to take a lap down our hallway, sniff around in an available exam room, hang out in our waiting area, and seal it with a kiss. You can do this as often as you would like until your pet becomes adjusted. This has worked for many of our patients!

Our goal is to make your visit with the veterinarian a positive experience. Many pets at some point in their lifetime will need diagnostics, hospitalization, or surgery that will require a stay at the veterinary hospital at some point in their lifetime. A pet that is comfortable with us is more cooperative and goes through less stress during an already difficult time.

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