

Tips on Taking Your Cat to the Veterinarian

THE CAT CARRIER

- Always transport the cat in a carrier or other safe container.
- Train cats to view the carrier as a safe haven and “home away from home.” Keep the carrier out in the home. Put treats, favorite toys, or blankets inside to entice the cat into the carrier.
- Carriers with both top and front openings are recommended. Top-loading carriers allow for stress-free placement and removal of the cat and enable them to be examined while remaining in the bottom half of the carrier.
- Bring the cat’s favorite treats, toys, and blanket. If the cat likes to be groomed, bring its favorite grooming equipment.
- If the cat has previously had negative experiences at a veterinary hospital, the veterinarian may prescribe a short-duration antianxiety medication that should be given approximately one hour prior to the visit.

THE CAR RIDE

- Take the cat for regular rides in the carrier, starting with very short ones, to places other than the veterinary hospital.
- Because cats may get carsick, do not feed the cat for at least an hour prior to travel.

AT THE HOSPITAL

- Reward desired behaviors, even small ones, with treats, verbal praise, and other things the cat likes (e.g., brushing, massaging, playing).
- Remain calm and speak in a soft voice to help the cat remain calm. If a situation is upsetting for the pet owner, the cat may do better if that person leaves the room.
- Always allow a trained veterinary team member to handle the cat. Even the sweetest and most laid-back cat can become aroused and fearful in a strange environment. Anxiety may cause the cat to act out of character and bite or scratch.
- Discuss techniques that might make future visits more relaxing for the pet owner and the cat.

