

10 Tips for Better Cat Vet Visits

Keeping Cat Veterinary Visits Calmer For Everyone

For Cat Owners:

1. Make your cat travel-savvy. Get your cat used to traveling. Start them at a young age for your best results.
2. Make the carrier your cat's "home away from home." Make it a comfortable resting, feeding or play location. Keep the transport carrier out and accessible in the home. Put treats in the carrier.
3. Let them play "peek-a-boo." Let your cat have a hiding place in the carrier by placing a towel or blanket from your home inside the carrier, and drape another one over part of the carrier. Using a familiar blanket or towel from home can also provide your cat some comfort while at the veterinary office.
4. Mix it up. Think about it – would you be happy getting in the car if every car trip meant a trip to the doctor's office? Mix in some fun trips, or maybe a social visit to the veterinary office just to get a treat or two.
5. Travel light. Avoid motion sickness by withholding food before travel. Plus, if it's a little bit hungry, your cat might be more interested in the treats your vet has to offer, and it could make the visit more pleasant for your cat.



For Veterinary Practices:

1. Have a separate waiting room for cats where they can have some distance from dog noises, smells and sights. Try to keep cats out of visual range of other cats.
2. Your clinic shouldn't be a library...or a stadium. Avoid sounds that may mimic hissing (eg, whispering) and avoid loud noises.
3. No surprises. Once in the exam room, allow the cat to adjust to the surroundings by removing the top or opening the door of the carrier. Move calmly and slowly. Some cats are happiest when the exam is concluded and they can return to their safe place.
4. We're not above bribery. Distract and reward cats with tasty treats, catnip and/or play. Note that some cats are genetically immune to catnip. Try synthetic pheromones on towels.
5. Less is more. Handle cats using minimal restraint. Some cats enjoy sensation of hiding in towel or being wrapped in towel. Examine cats in their carrier when feasible.