

UNDERSTANDING CAT BEHAVIOR

The following tips will help make veterinary visits easier for you and your cat:

- Respect your cat's need for time to become familiar with new situations, people, and places. Cats are most comfortable with familiar settings and may need more time to adjust to new settings than other pets.
- Stay calm. Cats can sense our anxiety and frustration, which may cause them to become fearful or anxious.
- Give rewards to encourage positive behavior. A treat is highly desirable to your cat and may be a good method to get your cat familiar with the carrier or new settings.



REDUCING THE STRESS OF VETERINARY VISITS FOR CATS

You are an important member of your cat's healthcare team.

You can be instrumental in helping your cat have more relaxed veterinary visits and improved healthcare.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARRIER

- The best carriers are inexpensive hard-sided carriers that open from the top and the front, and can also be taken apart in the middle.
- Avoid carriers that require a cat to be pulled from or dumped out.



- Choose carriers that are sturdy, secure, and stable for the cat.
- Carriers should be seat-belted into the car to keep your cat safe in the event of an accident.
- Some cats like to be able to see in the car and others do not. For the fearful cat, cover the carrier with a blanket or towel.

GETTING YOUR CAT COMFORTABLE WITH THE CARRIER

In general, cats dislike going to the veterinarian. This usually starts with the difficulty of getting the cat into the carrier. If we can make this step easier, the entire veterinary visit is usually less stressful. The goal is for your cat to learn to associate the carrier with positive experiences.

- Make the carrier a familiar place at home by leaving it in a room where your cat spends a lot of time.
- Place familiar soft bedding inside the carrier.
- Place treats, catnip, or toys inside the carrier to encourage the cat to enter at home.
- It may take days or weeks before your cat starts to trust the carrier. Remain patient and reward desired behaviors.
- Consider the use of synthetic feline facial pheromone (Feliway) analog spray in the carrier at least 30 minutes prior to transport.
- If you still have trouble, you may need to assess the carrier itself.



GETTING AN UNWILLING CAT INTO THE CARRIER

If your cat needs to visit the veterinarian and is not yet comfortable with the carrier, the following may help:

- Put the carrier in a small room with few hiding places. Bring the cat into the room and close the door. Move slowly and calmly. Encourage the cat to enter the carrier with treats or toys.
- If your cat will not enter the carrier and the carrier has an opening on the top, gently cradle your cat and lower it into the carrier. If the carrier does not have an opening on the top, remove the top half, gently place the cat in the bottom half, and replace the top.
- Use familiar bedding inside the carrier and consider the use of synthetic feline facial pheromone (Feliway) analog spray in the carrier at least 30 minutes prior to transport.

