

Fear Free Veterinary Visits



For Cats and Dogs:

- Cats and Dogs have a keen sense of smell which can drive them to behave in certain ways. Certain scents like air fresheners, disinfectants, perfumes, and colognes can cause animals to feel anxious. We at SVC try and minimize these scents by using **SYNTHETIC PHEROMONE DIFFUSERS and SPRAYS (Feliway for cats and Adaptil for dogs)** throughout the clinic to help manage fear and anxiety. Research shows these products have a calming effect on animals under stress, helping to reduce anxiety, fear and aggressive responses during vet visits. We spray these stress reducing pheromones on the staff and doctors and also on towels or bedding used during the pet's visit.
- We seek ways to minimize what feline patients see and hear during visits. When able, the receptionist will usher you into an exam room equipped with a pheromone diffuser right away alleviating exposure to other pets, especially dogs, in the waiting room.
- When available, it is practice policy to separate cats to a private treatment area so the feline will not see another animal. If possible, we will also separate fearful cats to a private kennel area when the pet has an extended stay with us.
- We use special cleaning products that have minimal scent, but are powerful enough to kill any bacteria or viruses that may be left behind by an infected pet.

You can help reduce your pet's fear and anxiety by following some simple guidelines.

- Keep your cat or small dog in a carrier and cover it with a towel. Start by covering the carrier at home, through the ride over and into the exam room.
- If the clinic is busy and you know your pet is fearful of a visit, you can keep your pet in the car until the doctor is ready to see the pet. Just let our receptionist know you are doing this so we can be sure to prompt you when the doctor is ready to see your pet.
- Where possible, perform mock vet exams at home to familiarize your pet with being handled. Do things like manipulate your pet's paws, inspect the ears, open the pet's mouth, move your hands over the legs and body, and comb or brush the coat. When a pet is used to being handled regularly, it will be less stressed when the real thing is occurring at the clinic.
- Get your pet used to the carrier. If the only time the pet sees the carrier is for vet visits you can hardly blame the pet for panicking. A week prior to the visit, place the carrier out for 15 minutes a day and allow the pet to sniff, climb inside and sleep inside if necessary to allow the pet time to acclimate to the new territory. By utilizing treats, a favorite toy or familiar bedding, you may be able to entice the pet to enter on their own.
- Consider using stress reducing pheromone spray like Feliway or Adaptil in the carrier, on a favorite blanket, in the car and on yourself to help reduce the pet's anxiety.
- Do not feed your pet before a visit. In this way you will decrease the chance of an accident in the car on the way over. Also, the pet may be more responsive to a treat from you, the staff or the doctor.
- Keep your cool. Your pets can sense your anxiety and stress, so remain calm. Stay positive and proceed at your pet's pace. Be aware of its response to what is happening, and use treats and other rewards to encourage the desired behavior.