

TIPS TO HELP GET YOUR CAT TO THE VETERINARY HOSPITAL SAFELY

We all know that getting a cat to the veterinary hospital is a lot tougher than for dogs. Hopefully, the following suggestions will help:

1. First of all, make sure you have a sturdy carrier. We recommend one that can be opened from the front or top as well as have the ability to remove the top half from the bottom half. Make sure it is clean and that all pieces are present, ex. the screws or clamps that hold the two halves together. Also place a towel or clothing item in the carrier that the cat may feel more comfortable on, yet one that can be discarded in case the cat has an accident. The cat needs to feel safe at all times.
2. If it is a kitten or even if it is an adult, periodically put the cat in the carrier with some treats and take for short car rides so he/she gets used to riding in the car.
3. As long as it is not an emergency, take the carrier out a few weeks before the appointment. Put some comfortable material in it as a liner and periodically put some treats or cat nip in the carrier. If possible place the carrier off the ground in a secure area where the cat can perch from inside. Again, we want the cat to feel comfortable and safe inside the carrier. We want them to voluntarily go into the carrier when possible.
4. If you have young kids, try and make the appointment when they are at school or make an appointment to drop the cat off. Sometimes young kids, loud noises, different smells and a different environment can make the cat fearful. If we feel the room is too noisy, we may ask to take the cat to a quieter area to finish the medical activity. We want to make this as least stressful as possible for the cat.
5. **If the cat has been to the veterinarian before and became aggressive or fearful, please notify the receptionist when you call.** It might be best to drop the cat off on a 12-hour fast (allowed to have water) and for us to use chemical restraint to avoid injury and hopefully prevent the cat from becoming too agitated.
6. If the cat is difficult to get into the carrier and you do not have time to adapt the cat to the carrier then try the following. Put the carrier in a small room with minimum hiding places and see if the cat won't choose the carrier to hide in. You can also remove the top half of the carrier, encourage the cat to go into the bottom half and then calmly replace the top half. As long as the cat will not bite you, you can place the cat in the carrier by standing it up so the front gate is open and facing the ceiling. Gently pick the cat up with one hand supporting the midsection and the other hand supporting the back end. Then place the cat rear end first (watch out for the front paws) down into the carrier and close the gate before laying the carrier back down.
7. If you do plan on dropping the cat off, please write down a list of everything you would like us to do including a phone number where you can be reached. If it is a new kitten or cat, try and bring a fresh stool sample from the litter box if the cat uses one. Just put the sample in a zip-lock bag. All we need is about ½ a teaspoon.
8. Getting the cat back home is also very important. If the cat is upset, then place it in a quiet, poorly lit room and just open the door and let the cat come out when he/she is ready. If you have a multi-cat household and you feel the other cats may

show aggression due to prior experiences, then put the cat and carrier in a separate room with food, water, and litter box and shut the door to the room. Leave the carrier door open and let the cat come out and stay in that room until the cats seem calm, meaning they will eat treats on either side of the door without hissing or play with each other under the door with their paws. In the future if possible, it might be best to bring both cats to the hospital at the same time so they will both return home with the same scent.

9. House calls. For certain behavioral issues or for those cats that traveling to the vet is not an option, we can offer house calls. Please note: certain conditions may require further diagnostic testing to be done at the hospital. If you are interested in learning more, we would be happy to discuss this as an option for you.

Please remember that we have a separate waiting room area for cats from the dogs, if we are not immediately able to get you and your cat into the cat exam room. If you have any further needs or questions, please feel free to call Plantation Animal Hospital at (904) 284-0087 and ask to speak with one of our cat advocates.