

Tips to Bring your Dog to the Veterinary Office

We know that some dogs are happy to get into your car and go anywhere and others are very fearful especially coming to the veterinary office. We have to realize that many dogs spend nearly all of their time at home so when they get into a car and are brought to a new place with new sounds, smells and other animals it can make them feel very uncomfortable. Here are some tips to help make the trip to the veterinary office or other places easier.

1) Get your dog used to wearing a harness or a dog car seat where they can feel safe. Have them wear the harness in the house, then go to the car and sit in it while it's off and feed your dog their favorite treats. If it's a car seat, put treats on the seat and allow them to get in on their own. Don't force the issue. Keep doing this until they're comfortable getting into the car, this may take a few times. Be patient with your dog, this is all new for them.

Make sure the car is a comfortable temperature, play calm music and go for a short 5 minute car ride with your dog fastened into the car seat. Reward calm behavior with treats. Never punish them for being nervous, this will only make them more fearful. Ignore nervous behavior and keep trying with short trips and lots of praise and treats until they are calm being in the car.

Spray pheromones (such as Adaptil, available at Plantation Animal Hospital, amazon.com) can be sprayed on a towel or piece of clothing and put in the car with the dog (spray the item 15 minutes prior to giving to the dog). These dog appeasing pheromones (DAP) can help keep the dog calm.

Don't feed your pet prior to coming in so they may be more likely to take treats at the clinic or bring their favorite treats from home.

2) Once at the vet, if you have a very nervous dog, please ask to go to a room rather than wait in the waiting room. Let the staff know if you have a nervous pet, we will be sure to take extra time to help make them feel comfortable, give them treats, etc. Praise all calm behavior, do not punish them for hiding and being nervous. Do not force them to be petted by anyone.

3) It's best to keep these appointments as quiet as possible by keeping young children and other pets at home.

4) Once the visit is over, here are some suggestions to help your dog feel more comfortable back at home:

- a) allow your dog some time in a quiet room, alone and away from other pets and children before allowing them to reunite with their housemates
- b) if there are multiple dogs, take all of the dogs on a walk to distract them from the new smells your dog may have from being at the veterinary office
- c) praise all calm behavior, including the dogs that weren't at the veterinary office

5) Sometimes dogs are too fearful and need oral medication to help calm them for their veterinary visit. If you feel your pet needs something to get them to the office easier please call ahead and we can help you.