



Easy Cat Trip to Vet

Most cats don't like going to the vet. Look at it from their point of view. They are removed from their home, shoved in a box that smells of fear, placed in a bigger moving box that makes them sick, carried in some place and surrounded by scary noises, smells, dogs, and people. Then they are made to do things like hold still (and, as we all know, cats hate being told what to do).



After all that stress, they have to repeat the process before getting back home where their housemate may attack them because they smell funny. It's easy to see why traveling with cats is hard.

However, it's extremely important their health be monitored for signs of disease. **Cats are masters at disguise, and hide illnesses until they are very sick.** Here's what we suggest to make your trip easier for your cat (and you).

Conquering carrier fear

- Keep the cat carrier open and available at all times. This eliminates the association of the carrier equaling a vet trip.
- If you can't keep the carrier out, get it ready days in advance. This gives your cats the chance to get comfortable around it.
- **Feed your cats in the carrier.** They learn the carrier means food, not scary.
- Spray Feliway® into the carrier. This will give it a calming smell.



- Lavender essential oil can also be calming. Wipe the oil (just a little!) onto the door or towel.
- If your cat absolutely hates a carrier, use a box, hamper, pillowcase, or basket.

Surviving the car ride

- Cover the carrier with a towel. This will help calm your cat.
- Buckle the carrier in so your cat doesn't slide around.
- Do NOT let your cat out of the carrier. This is a danger to your cat and you.
- If your cat gets carsick, ask us for medicines that may help. Signs of carsickness include yawning, foaming at the mouth/drooling, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Use a ThunderShirt® when traveling. This swaddles your cat (similar to swaddling babies) to make him feel more comfortable. Make sure you get your cat used to the thundershirt before taking a car ride.
- **Classical music has been shown to calm animals.** The CD *through a Cat's Ear* is especially effective.
- If your cat has a tendency to panic in the car, ask us for medicine that can help calm him down.



Victorious Vet Visit

- If you don't go into an exam room immediately when you arrive, place your cat as high as possible. This prevents your cat going nose to nose with a dog and will make him feel more secure.
- When in an exam room, open the carrier door and let your cat come out on his own or simply take the top off and lay a towel over your cat.



Georgie is comfortable coming out of his carrier on his own. Treats are on the table near him.

- Let the trained veterinary staff hold your cat for the exam. They are trained in stress free handling.
- Stay calm. If needed, leave the room. **Cats feed off the energy in the room.** If you are anxious, your cat will become anxious. Breathe slowly and make long slow blinks to show your cat that everything is calm and safe.
- Try to bring your cat in without the company of the family dog.
- Leave your cat in the exam room when you check out if dogs are in the reception area.
- Avoid petting your cat from head to tail. Most cats do not want to be petted past the head, especially when stressed. A stressed or agitated cat will flick his tail and ears.

Successful Welcome Home

- For a short time, place the carrier in a separate room away from your other cats when you get home. This will allow the "vet smell" to dissipate.
- Rub the cat that went to the vet with a blanket that your other cat sleeps on. This will transfer "good smells".
- Feed your cats or give them treats to help them forget about being mad at each other.

We know how stressful it can be for you to bring your cat in and want to make the process easier for both of you. Call us for more advice or to borrow a cat carrier. We offer a **free stress kit** you can pick up before your appointment that includes calming treats and a Feliway towel.



Dexter during his annual check-up. A towel with Feliway® was added to the table that is covered with a yoga mat to prevent cats from slipping and to keep it warmer.