



## **HOW TO MAKE VISITING THE VETERINARIAN A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR PET**

Our goal at Harbourview Animal Hospital is to minimize the stress and anxiety that your pet may experience when he/she comes to visit us. Many of these modalities start at home several days, even weeks, before their scheduled appointment.

### **The Appointment Begins at Home and Early Visits**

#### **DOGS**

> Acclimatizing nervous pets: We encourage owners to bring their pet several days before the appointment to meet us in the hospital and in between appointments to eat a few treats, creating a positive association.

#### **DOGS & CATS**

> Bring your pet hungry. When medically appropriate, withhold food for several hours before an appointment so he/she is highly food-motivated.

> De-stress the carrier. Make the carrier a fun place to be in. Use it at home as a regular place to feed treats and deliver toys. In addition, spray it with pheromones such as Adaptil or Feliway. We have these products for purchase at our hospital. Cover the carrier with towels on three sides and hold it from the bottom rather than the handle to minimize motion.

#### **CATS**

For additional information on your cat's carrier, please visit this weblink: <http://harbourviewanimalhospital.com/pdf/Getting-Your-Cat-To-The-Vet-B&W.pdf>.

### **Other Useful Tools**

#### **DOGS & CATS**

##### ThunderShirts

They apply gentle, constant pressure, similar to swaddling an infant. ThunderShirts have a calming effect and reduce your cat's or dog's (and your) anxiety for the entire veterinary experience: travelling to, during and travelling home.

We can lease them for your first visit. Bring calming items such as ThunderShirts along to the appointment, if you own them.



## **CATS**

### Clipnosis

It is a small plastic scruff clip that resembles a chip bag clip. A safe way to calm and immobilize cats for minor veterinary procedures, they provide adequate restraint for nail trimming or administering injections. The application of neck clips is similar to "scruffing," to induce immobility. The positive response to the clipping is almost identical to that seen in kittens picked up by the skin of their neck by their mother. The level of immobilization and relaxation varies among individuals.

### **Administration of Anti-anxiety Medications, Nutricentials, or Diet**

For pets that don't respond to the above techniques, we use anti-anxiety drugs, which reduce patients' stress levels.

## **DOGS**

> Trazadone for dogs. This medication helps to manage anxiety-related disorders and facilitate sleep. Regular daily dosing is more common with generalized anxiety disorders and as-needed dosing is used when stimuli can be predicted. Therefore, Trazadone is used in situations in which there is an identifiable stimulus, such as hospital visits, or before an owner's departure in separation anxiety cases.

## **CATS**

> Gabapentin for cats. It is given at home two hours before the appointment and your cat may be a calmer pet when he/she arrives.

## **DOGS & CATS**

> Natural products such as Zylkene (capsules that can be opened up) or Bio-Calm (liquid), provide a calming influence on dogs and cats experiencing stress and anxiety. Both of these products have a mother's milk protein to promote relaxation.

> Diets such as Hills c/d Multicare Feline Stress and Royal Canin Calm.