

CATS & CARRIERS- GETTING YOUR CAT TO THE VET

Providing regular health care for your cat is essential for a longer, healthier, and more comfortable life for her. Many cats, however, don't get the regular veterinary care they need due to the amount of stress caused by simply trying to get them to the veterinary hospital. Here, a few tips to make the trip to your veterinarian less stressful—for both your cat and you.



Carrier:

Trips to the veterinarian should not be the only time your furry friend encounters his carrier. You want your cat to associate his carrier with positive experiences. Have him enter the carrier on a regular basis so he's more comfortable in it. Leave the carrier in a room where your cat spends lots of time and give him time to become familiar with it. Placing soft bedding or clothing inside may help him feel more secure.

Getting Her In

Treats, toys, or catnip placed inside her carrier will help to encourage your cat to enter. It could take days, or maybe even weeks, for her to begin to trust her carrier, so be patient. Always reward your cat for the behavior you want. So if she is sitting near or exploring the carrier, give her a treat.

If your cat is not yet used to the carrier, but needs to go to the veterinarian right away, try putting her in a small room that has few hiding places with the carrier. Put a special treat in the carrier to encourage her to enter. If the treat doesn't entice her and your carrier has an opening at the top, try to gently cradle her and lower her into the carrier. If your carrier allows, remove the top half, place your cat into the lower half, and calmly replace the top.

Picking The Right Carrier

Before deciding which of the many cat carriers on the market is best for your cat, consider your cat's size, how well he tolerates handling, and which carrier is easiest to transport. It should be safe, secure, sturdy, and easy for you to carry. Some of the best carriers are hard-sided and open from both the front and the top. An easily removable top allows a cat who is fearful, anxious, or in pain to stay in the bottom half for exams by the veterinarian.

Car Ride

SunShine Animal Hospital Client Education Series

Your furry friend will be safest in the car if you secure her carrier using a seat belt. If she seems anxious, it sometimes helps to cover, either partially or completely, her carrier with a blanket or towel, although some cats would prefer to be able to see what's going on outside of the carrier. Also, there is a product called *Feliway* that you can spray into the carrier to help with anxiety.