



## How we try to manage stress, fear and anxiety in pets coming to our office

Our staff feels it is warranted to provide awareness and enforce safety precautions for future visits. We understand that after these stressful appointments, owners can feel overwhelmed in our office so we want to provide you with information that you can digest at your leisure.

We are sending you home with information and medications due to one or more of the following:

- **Severe stress and/or anxiety**
- **Severe fear that has resulted in aggression**
- **Aggression and bite attempts**
- **The staff is unable to handle your pet in a safe manner without being scratched, bit, or harmed in another way.**
- **Severe stress that could result in respiratory distress for your pet.**
- **We feel that your pet has been pushed past the brink and could result in harm to itself (ex: back injuries, ocular injuries)**

The medications being sent home with you today are labeled accurately on when to be administered and how often. It is imperative that you follow these instructions for the best outcome of the combination of medications. **If you fail or refuse to administer appropriately this can result in a rescheduled appointment or refusal to examine your pet at Sylvan Veterinary Hospital.**

Below are some frequently asked questions:

**Q: What are the medications I am receiving today and what can I expect after administration?**

**A:** Typically, the most common combination of medications our doctors prescribe are Gabapentin, Trazodone, and Acepromazine. Gabapentin is a neuropathic analgesic that can also cause sedative-like effects. Trazodone is an anti-anxiety medication. Acepromazine is a tranquilizer that is associated with a reduction in anxiety and stress and causes variable levels of sedation.

These medications are meant to cause sedation. That is our goal! You may notice grogginess, stumbling when walking, redness to the eyes.

**Q: Do I have to administer all three medications?**

**A:** Yes, they are prescribed together due to different mechanisms of action, duration periods, and when used in conjunction it creates an ideal state of sedation.

**Q: What happens if these medications do not work for my pet?**

**A:** This is always the first place we want to start. In some situations, we can attempt to administer injectable sedations. This is not always an ideal situation due to if we are unable to handle the patient, it makes it very difficult to be able to administer injectable medications. Injectable medications also add significant cost to each appointment.

**Q: When should these medications be given in the future?**

**A:** These medications should be given before any scheduled appointments. Keep in mind that if your pet has to be medicated, morning appointments are best. Medications should also be given prior to surgical procedures so we can safely handle your pet, unless you have been otherwise directed by your veterinarian. If your pet is not feeling well and requires a sick appointment, please call into the office and discuss it with a technician. We can then direct you depending on the severity of illness if the medications should still be administered.

**Q: Is there anything else that I can do to help make these appointments less stressful?**

**A:** Absolutely! Every patient requires different means of consoling or decreasing stress. One or several of these attempts could help your pet in conjunction with the medications.

- Waiting in your vehicle or outside of the building for a room to be available to avoid the stress of a waiting room
- Inquiring about telemedicine consults (some medical issues can be treated through pictures, videos and phone consults with our veterinarians)
- Bringing one pet vs. multiple for an appointment. One pet can wear off on the other pet. Since their buddy is nervous, they think they should be nervous too
- Try to minimize the amount of people that come along to appointment, especially children when able
- Bringing attention to our staff that your pet may require female only appointments vs. male or that your pet does better away from you, so they do not feel like they have to protect you
- Only asking to have nail trims performed when absolutely medically necessary.
- Be diligent in training and stay engaged in your pet's appointment.
- Seeking out a trainer for behavioral issues