



***MyVets Irrawang & Thornton***

## Fear Free Veterinary Visits



Creating a positive experience for your pet during trips to the Veterinary Hospital is important to us here at [MyVets](#). Having a pet that is better conditioned for vet visits decreases patient and owner stress, improves patient care and treatment, promotes healing and recovery after illness and surgery, and improves the mental well-being of our patients.

[Fear-free](#) visits can start at home, and we have provided some helpful tips that you can do at home to prepare your pet for your trip to the hospital.

## Vehicle preparation

- Play quiet, familiar, calming music- or silence. Avoid loud or startling noises
- Secure large animals with a safety harness and seatbelt. Pets that move around can hurt themselves, and may become stressed by slipping
- Secure small dogs and cats in pet carrier, on the floor behind the passenger seat. Use a towel to drape over the cage, especially for cats
- Place a pheromone-infused towel or owners' scent in the vehicle or carrier\*

## Transporting your dog

- Condition dogs to car rides before vet visits. Use treats and toys to train your dog to become accustomed to the crate or harness. Practice being in the car while stationary, then progress to short car rides
- Provide food-stuffed toys, and non-slip surfaces
- Drive calmly, reward calm behaviour and monitor body language
- If your dog is too stressed for transport (drooling, panting, sweating, vocalisation, elimination), **STOP!** and call the hospital to speak to our team\*\*

## Returning home with dogs

- Vet visits can be stressful, and your dog may need time to re-adjust to being home
- Allow somewhere quiet to rest, away from other pets and disturbances, particularly if your dog is recovering from sedation or anaesthetic
- Aggression between family dogs can occur after vet visits. Try and plan for other dogs to be out on a walk when bringing your dog home, remove high value food treats or toys, and avoid raising your voice or verbally or physically correcting them
- Give the returning dog some time to wander around and re-adjust to the home before reintroduction with other dogs
- Let the dogs meet in neutral territory, such as the front yard or somewhere they don't spend a lot of time
- Use a calm voice, lots of praise and food rewards on reintroduction, and monitor their interactions for the first 24 hours or so

## Choosing a pet carrier for cats

- Carriers that can be taken apart, or the top half removed are recommended. This means that your cat can remain sitting in the bottom of their carrier if they feel more secure, where we can perform most procedures and examinations
- The carrier should be big enough to lie down and turn around



## Cat carrier tips

- Rather than store carrier in the garage, always leave the carrier out in the home, encourage your cat to sleep in it, and place in preferred resting place where your cat likes to hang out
- Remove the top half if your cat prefers to lie in it that way
- Feed treats and play with your cat in the carrier regularly
- All the above will help desensitise your cat to the carrier

## Placing cat in the carrier

- Avoid dragging your cat out of hiding to place in the carrier
- If your cat bites, hisses or scratches, **STOP!** and call the hospital to speak to our team\*\*
- Try to lure your cat in the cage with food, treats or toys, and refer to the cat carrier tips to desensitise your cat to the carrier
- Rather than use the handle to carry the carrier, carry with both hands, holding close to your chest
- Provide a non-slip mat or towel in the bottom of the carrier and place a towel over the carrier
- Use a pheromone infused towel in the cage or over the cage\*

## Returning home with cats

- Conflict or fighting between other household cats can occur when cats return from the hospital. This can be because your cat smells different, as cats recognise each other by scent
- Keep cats isolated from other pets on returning home
- Using a hand towel or rag, rub the resident cat, particularly around the face and cheeks, then use the same towel to rub over the vet visit cat. This will create a more familiar scent association.
- On reintroduction, do so at feeding time for a distraction

# We recommend using **Adaptil** (dogs) or **Feliway** (cats) as a calming pheromone. These products are synthetic pheromones that help to alleviate stress, fear and anxiety in dogs and cats. Find out more [Behaviour / Companion animals / Products / Ceva Australia](#)



## We routinely use medications to assist patient's veterinary visits that show signs of fear, anxiety and stress (FAS). These medications offer a slight sedative, are safe, and work to calm the patient and alleviate FAS. They can be given at home before the visit, so they are in effect at the time of the visit.

If you think medication would be helpful for your pet, contact the clinic to discuss with our team who are ready to discuss

For more information on behaviour, training, and helpful resources visit [Fear Free Happy Homes for Pets](#)