



Choosing a carrier and getting your cat used to it

There are many kinds of cat carriers, from very simple models to more complex varieties. Regardless of type, transporting your cat in a carrier is the safest thing you can do for your cat, and ultimately less stressful for you both. The key is getting your cat comfortable with the idea of being in the carrier. This takes patience and perseverance, but the benefits are worth it.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CAT'S BEHAVIOR

Cats need time to adjust to the unfamiliar. Allow them time to assess new situations, smells, people and places.

Cats do not learn from punishment or force. If your cat is sitting calmly in or near a carrier, or is being handled by a stranger, reward him or her with a treat. A "treat" is anything that your cat loves - food, play or affection. Be consistent!

For more information on understanding cat behaviors visit VCACattitude.com



You are the key member of your cat's healthcare team! Encouraging calm, regular veterinary visits will improve your cat's happiness and health now – and well into the future.

Coming home - keeping peace in a multi-cat household

The unfamiliar smells of the hospital may make the cats at home anxious and even aggressive.

- Leave the returning cat in the carrier to see how your other cat(s) react. You may want to distract the cat(s) at home with food or toys to remove the focus on the returning cat.
- If all cats appear calm, let the returning cat out of the carrier.
- If you sense tension, keep the returning cat in a separate room. Provide food, water and a litter box for a minimum of 24 hours.

If there is still stress, contact your veterinarian for further advice or medication to help ease the process.

For future visits, consider bringing both/all cats to the hospital together to avoid potential conflict.

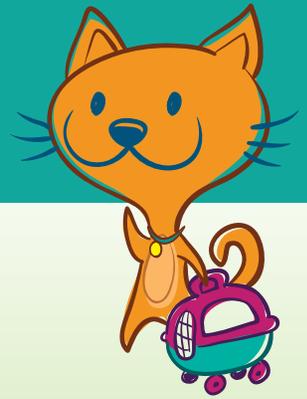


GETTING YOUR CAT TO THE VETERINARIAN Purrrr-escious cargo



TIPS TO LESSEN THE TRANSPORTATION STRESS FOR YOU AND YOUR CAT!

One of the best ways to keep your cat happy and healthy is to make visits to the veterinarian as comfortable and stress-free as possible. When you adopt a positive “cattitude” and show assurance, your cat will feel more relaxed too!



9 Tips to lessen the stress for you and your cat!

1. Before putting your cat in a carrier, keep the carrier in a room your cat frequents. Make it more comfortable and reassuring by placing bedding inside, preferably something with yours or your cat's scent on it.



2. Place treats, catnip or toys inside the carrier to encourage your cat to enter. You can do this daily, and may even consider feeding your cat in the carrier to build a positive association. It can take weeks before your cat starts to trust the carrier. Reward desired behavior.

3. Spray or wipe the inside of the carrier with Feliway®* a synthetic feline pheromone that helps cats feel secure. It is recommended that you do this daily, not just before a trip to the veterinarian.

* Available from your VCA veterinarian

4. Give yourself time to get the cat into the carrier when it's time for his or her visit. Have the carrier close by, wrap your cat in a towel (that smells familiar) and in order to avoid a struggle, put him or her into the carrier gently yet confidently.

5. Carriers should always be seat-belted into the car by wrapping the belt securely around the carrier, preferably in the back seat.

6. Most cats are less anxious when the carrier is covered. Drive carefully and refrain from playing loud, disturbing music.

7. If your cat is ill or nervous he or she may soil the carrier, so take some spare bedding with you for the ride home.



8. Once you are at the hospital, ask the staff if there is a designated cats-only waiting area. If not, choose the quietest location. Place the carrier on a chair or ledge, rather than placing it on the ground. Avoid dogs and other cats if possible.

9. Your hospital's team often includes staff members who are cat-specialists or simply great with cats – just ask. They can make a big difference in your cat's (and your) experience at our hospital. Plus every member of the hospital team cares about each and every patient (canine or feline), and are here to help you and your cat in any way they can.

