



## **Fear Free Transport of Cats to the Vet Hospital**

You can help us create a low-stress visit by setting up the environment for your animal to help them feel safe and secure before, during, and after your appointment. Most cats go through a “stress ladder”, which often begins prior to arrival to the vet hospital. Here are some general guidelines on what you can do to help create a “Fear Free” car ride to the Vet hospital.

### **Safety First**

It is very important to us that everyone is safe during travel. This includes securing your pet appropriately and using equipment that is crash tested. An unrestrained pet in the car can be distracting and cause an accident if there is a sudden stop, your pet could slip, causing stress and a potential injury. Follow this link for more detailed information regarding crash tested crates and seatbelts for dogs and cats. <http://www.centerforpetsafety.org/>

### **Before you travel**

- Use treats and positive reinforcement to get your animals comfortable using the crate ahead of time, so they feel safe.
- Here is a great video for cats on teaching them to love their crate / carrier.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir9m0ZaCIAM>

### **When you're ready to go (Car Preparation)**

- Spray a towel with Feliway 20 minutes before placing the cat in the carrier, or use Feliway wipes on the inside of the carrier.
- Cover the carrier with the towel and keep it covered, ensuring the carrier will feel safer.
- Cats should be secured in a carrier on the floor behind the passenger seat.
- Create a safe and comfortable environment in the car by:
  - o Keeping it quiet
    - o Playing calming music (“Through A Cat’s Ear”).
    - o Avoiding loud noises that might frighten them.
    - o Using items to make the car smell familiar (blankets from home etc.)
- Bring along some of your cat’s favorite treats so you can use them to reward calm behavior.

**When you arrive**

- Keep the cat carrier covered so they can feel safe.
- Make sure to avoid carrying the carrier by the handle as this creates instability and can cause your cat to slip therefore increasing stress.
- Keep the carrier up high so they are not at eye-level with other animals that frighten them such as dogs.
- If your pets are particularly anxious when they arrive, let us know so we can develop a plan to help them stay calm, feel safe and be relaxed as possible.
- Please make our staff aware of any food allergies. We will continue to offer treats to make your pets experience more positive.

**When you go home**

- Keep in mind that when animals go to the vet they can smell different, look different (bandage, splint, subcutaneous fluids etc.) and act different (they aren't feeling well or they are still feeling the effects of anesthesia/ sedation). This can upset other pets at home.
- Watch closely to how your pets interact when you go home.
- Isolate any pets that have been sedated or anesthetized until they are normal again.
- If you are seeing stressful interactions when you go home please contact us.