



PET MEDICAL CENTER

501 E. FM 2410 • Harker Heights, Texas 76548
(254) 690-6769
www.pet-medcenter.com

Happier Veterinary

Visits for Your Pet!

We would like every pet that comes into our clinic to be happy to come to see us, but we understand that for many reasons, a veterinary visit can be a very scary thing for your pet. At Pet Medical Center we may try many different things to promote a better visit including lots of treats, pheromone diffusers and pheromones on towels and clothes to help calm dogs and cats, calming music, cleaners without strong odors, and early medical intervention for stressed pets. You may also notice our staff approaching your pet in different ways (avoiding direct confrontation, approaching them from the side) to keep them at ease. In addition to all these measures, we have staff members who are certified in Fear Free, which is a program that focuses on recognizing and decreasing fear, anxiety, and stress in our patients.

Although we can do many things in the clinic to help your pet, Fear Free works best when we work with you, the owner, to start the process at home. Below are some recommendations for your pet that you can do prior to and during the appointment.

Carrier training

Many animals (especially cats) know exactly what is coming because the carrier comes out. We recommend leaving the carrier out all the time, or at least a couple weeks before the visit. Feed or treat your pet in the carrier. For the hard plastic carriers, you can take it apart and just leave out the bottom with a blanket in it. We want that carrier to be your pet's safe place while they are in the clinic. In many cases we can examine your cat right in the carrier with the top removed.

Other carrier tips: always put a soft blanket in the bottom. You can use pheromone sprays to calm animals in carriers as well. Never lift a carrier by the handle – always hold it underneath so that it does not swing and your pet feels secure. Have a towel or blanket to place over three sides of the crate so that your pet can choose to not look out if they want.

Pheromone sprays

Feliway cats and adaptil dogs are calming pheromones. They come in sprays, wipes, and diffusers. We use towels with feliway spray for cats and adaptil sprayed on bandanas for dogs. You can use these on blankets or towels before the visit. Sprays last 4-6 hours and should be used 30 minutes prior.

Classical music in the car

There are studies showing that classical music is calming to pets. In fact, animals in surgery even need less anesthetic drugs when classical music is played! Play this in the car on the way to the clinic.

Bring your pet in hungry!

We want to be able to distract them with yummy treats, and a full belly can also mean motion sickness on the way to the appointment. If they are picky, bring their favorite treat as well!

Get calming medications prior to the visit.

If you know your pet will be extremely anxious, please call and talk to us about picking up some medication to give them ahead of time. There are a wide variety of medications and supplements that can be calming for pets. Each pet responds differently, so it might take a few tries to get the right combination. Expect them to be sleepy the rest of the day after medications.

Thundershirt

This is a body wrap that is basically a big comforting hug. You can order them online and for about 1/3 of pets it works really well to calm them for visits. Another 1/3 of pets get some benefit from the thundershirt. It was originally developed for storm-phobic animals, so if your pet has stress in other situations, consider trying this product.

Once you arrive:

Leave your pet in the car if needed. Some pets get very stressed in the waiting room. Please just check in with our front desk and keep them in the car if they are more comfortable there.

Let us know if there is something that works best with your pet! Treats, water, a towel or mat; whatever we can do to make your pet more relaxed.

We feel strongly that decreased fear, anxiety, and stress in our patients leads to a safer and more rewarding visit, better healthcare, and ultimately better health for our patients. Sometimes this means it may take us a little longer to come up with the right formula for your pet, and maybe a few more visits if we are trying out supplements or medications. Sometimes this may even mean full sedation for some pets, but we will try to use other interventions first if possible. We know this is only possible if we are working as a team with you, the owner, to provide the best care possible for your pet.