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Prevent Your Pet from Fearing Veterinary Visits

Veterinary visits are part of keeping your pet healthy. With a positive attitude and a little bit of training, it can be a better experience for your fluffy friend. Enlist your veterinary team to find what works best for your pet, and do not be embarrassed to ask for medication therapy to make visits go smoothly.

Treats!

Gather your pet's favorite treats, and wear your training-treat pouch when visiting your veterinarian. Small pieces of treats should be given as a reward during your pet's veterinary visit. Cats may warm up to catnip or a small amount of canned food fed on a spoon during the visit. Talking in a calm voice and having your pet on a comfortable harness such as the easy walk harness can help.

Avoid aversive methods such as jerking on the leash, using prong or choke collars, electric collars, yelling or physical punishment, as these can cause more stress and anxiety. Dogs that are treated with these methods are 2.2 times more likely to be aggressive to people outside of the home.

Come for Positive Visits

Pets should be brought to the veterinary clinic for positive visits. Come to just sit in the lobby for a minute and give treats to your pet. You can also practice having your pet sit on the scale while giving treats. All of these are free and do not need to be pre-scheduled at ZimmVet. Try to do this at times when it is less busy and there are not a lot of other pets around such as mid-week, during the middle of the day. Pets that attend daycare or training at a veterinary clinic will associate these positive experiences with the clinic. At ZimmVet, consider attending Dogs and Donuts on Saturdays where you can accompany your dog to play in the indoor and outdoor exercise areas with other dogs.

Medications

Medication and sedation should not be reserved only as a last resort. If your pet is fearful and will not take a treat at your veterinarian's office, your pet would benefit from additional training, along with antianxiety medications. There are different options for dogs that can be given orally before the appointment. Discuss with your veterinarian what will be best for your pet. Cats that get very upset may benefit from an injectable sedative once they arrive in the clinic. Natural options for anxiety include the thundershirt, rescue remedy and pet pheromones such as adaptil and feliway.

Know your pet

If your pet gets worked up around other animals, you should request to go immediately into an exam room. At ZimmVet we have a side entrance that pet owners can avoid the lobby completely, if necessary. Slippery floors can scare pets, bring a rubber yoga mat for your pet to sit on while waiting and in the exam room. Some pets are more comfortable on their owner's laps or on the floor vs exam table. Make sure to voice what works best for your pet before and during your visit to your veterinary clinic.

Safety First

Any pet can scratch and bite at any given time. Even pets that are easy going can react by biting or scratching when painful and sick. If your pet is getting too distressed, stopping the appointment and coming back at a later time is a good option for your pet and to ensure your safety and the safety of those caring for your pet.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.