

# 10 THINGS THAT MAKE FEAR FREE VETERINARY VISITS DIFFERENT

## FEAR FREE HAPPY HOMES

Helping pets live happy, healthy, full lives



What do we mean when we say that a veterinary visit is Fear Free? A veterinary team member who is Fear Free certified wants your pet to be happy when he comes through the door of the clinic.

Fear Free doesn't mean that your pet will never experience anything uncomfortable at the veterinarian—he may be injured or ill, after all—but it does mean that we make every effort to reduce any fear, anxiety, and stress related to examinations and procedures. Here are 10 ways we help your pet stay comfortable and relaxed from arrival to departure.

- ⊗ **The waiting game is over.** You can expect to have a species-specific waiting area—no dogs invading your cat's private space—be given the option of waiting in your car with your pet until you are texted or called to come in, or be taken right into the exam room.
- ⊗ **No more sitting on slick, cold surfaces.** Your pet will have a nonslip surface to stand on such as a yoga mat or a warm, pheromone-infused towel.
- ⊗ **Relaxation rules.** Pheromone and aromatherapy diffusers emit calming substances into the air, and pet-friendly music works its calming effect on the central nervous system. (You might benefit, too.)
- ⊗ **Eye contact is for you, not your pet.** Fear Free certified veterinary team members will initially avoid eye contact with your pet and focus on you, instead. This helps your pet feel less stressed because he's not the center of attention and gives him time to check out his environment and become accustomed to the team member's presence.
- ⊗ **Got treats?** Bring your dog or cat in hungry because Fear Free certified veterinary team members will be handing out many small but delicious treats throughout the visit to welcome your pet, distract him from procedures and reward him for cooperation.
- ⊗ **Color therapy.** Bright white can be startling to animals. Pastels are more soothing, so veterinary professionals wear lab coats and scrubs in those shades.
- ⊗ **Playing doctor.** In addition to treats, our veterinary team members utilize a variety of distraction techniques such as toys to help your pet be comfortable.
- ⊗ **"The back" is out.** Whenever possible, our Fear Free certified veterinary team members will perform exams and procedures right there in the exam so your pet will be reassured by your presence and you can assist as needed, and you'll have the assurance that he will be treated kindly and respectfully.
- ⊗ **A little extra help?** If needed, we will prescribe anti-anxiety or other calming medications or supplements to help make the car ride and the visit more enjoyable and less frightening for your pet.
- ⊗ **Emotional rescue.** Our veterinary team members will note your pet's emotional response to the visit and what treats and techniques worked best to reduce any fear, anxiety, and stress that may have been expressed. This will help to make future visits even better.