



## **Fear Free Transport of Dogs 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 dogs 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.
- Choose the appropriate restraint for transporting your dog.
- Crate or carrier for small dogs
  - o Provide a non-slip liner.
  - o Place the carrier in the back of the vehicle.
  - o Choose the correct size for your dog.
  - o Do not place near the airbag.
- Harness and seatbelt system for larger dogs
  - o Ensure the harness is correct size and fits comfortably.
  - o Use the backseat.
  - o Do not leave a seat-belted dog unattended ever.
  - o Please use e <http://www.centerforpetsafety.org/> for more info in harness or crate selection
- Conditioning your dog to your chosen restraint device.
  - o Get your dog conditioned to restraint device in your home first.
  - o Once conditioned to the device go for a short car ride.

- o Reward your dog for calm behavior.
- o Prepare your dog's favorite treats to have on hand in the car.
- o Success on short rides indicates your dog's readiness for the trip to the hospital.
- o Do not force your dog into the restraint device especially if they appear nervous or anxious.

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

- Spray a towel with Adaptil dog appeasing pheromone 20 minutes before placing the dog in the car
- Create a safe and comfortable environment in the car by:
  - o Keeping it quiet.
    - o Playing calming music ("Through A Dog'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 dog's favorite treats so you can use them to reward calm behavior.

### **When you arrive**

- If your dog is obviously anxious, please call us from the parking lot and we can help you in through a side entrance to avoid the waiting room.
  - If your pet is anxious and time allows feel free to take your pet for a walk to calm him or her down.
  - 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 bring your dog's favorite treats to help reward their calm behavior.
  - 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.