



## PREPARING YOUR DOG *or* PUPPY



Visiting your veterinarian is essential to keeping your dog healthy and happy and it is an important part of being a responsible pet owner. However, a routine checkup can sometimes be distressing to our canine companions.

When you consider what a vet visit entails, you can begin to appreciate why your dog may become so overwhelmed and (sometimes) hard to control. Not only will they encounter dozens of new smells, but they may also hear barking dogs, meowing cats and strange voices. They may be handled by vet staff in unfamiliar ways that could add to their apprehension.

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### Help your dog feel more relaxed and even enjoy his vet visits by following these tips:

- Take the dog to the vet clinic for brief visits prior to your appointment. Introduce them to the clinic when it's quiet to get them used to the smells and sounds of the new environment so it won't be entirely strange to them when you actually go for the exam. Let them meet the wonderful people who work there; have the staff give them a treat and place them on a scale; and allow them to sniff the exam room. A few visits like this will help them to associate the vet clinic with a positive experience.
- At home, during quiet times, you can help your dog become comfortable with being handled for a medical examination. Gently pat them on different areas of their body while they are in a relaxed state. Mimic how the vet will examine your dog-touch around their eyes and ears, gently hold their feet and toes (which also help to alleviate their fear of nail clipping) lift their lips and touch their teeth; gently move their legs, etc. Take your time with this kind of touch, and do it often so that it becomes an agreeable experience for your dog both at home and at the vet.
- Some dogs never go anywhere in the car except to the vet. Thus, a dog may begin to associate a car ride with visiting the vet and may begin to worry the moment you put them in the car. To prevent this anxiety, do some practice drives. Take them somewhere fun, so they learn that a ride in the car can end in a pleasurable destination.
- Exercise your dog before the vet visit. A tired dog is more relaxed and easier to manage.
- Throughout the visit, stay relaxed and unconcerned. Your dog can sense your feelings, and you need to remain calm so they can feel calm. Remember, your dog looks to you for their safety and security.
- Keep your pet on a short lead while in the waiting area, and maintain control of them throughout your visit to avoid any stress, injury or altercations with other pets. If they show any signs of aggression toward dogs or humans, be sure to have them muzzled for everyone's safety.
- If you have a small dog, take them into the clinic in their carrier. They'll feel more comfortable being in their familiar space, with his blanket, toys, etc.
- After the vet visit, take your dog somewhere fun to play and to reward them.

Your veterinarian and clinic staff will also appreciate you taking the time to ensure your dog is calm and comfortable during their visit.

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