

February 2018

Feline Friendly

Written by Dr. Stephanie Winske at Country Hills Pet Hospital

GETTING YOUR CAT TO THE VET

Bringing your cat to the veterinary clinic can be quite a stressful experience for you and your cat. We want to give you the tools and knowledge to be able to safely and calmly transport your cat to the clinic for those important yearly checkups or if you need to make an unexpected visit.



Carrier Etiquette We recommend

using a hard carrier that provides stability for your cat. Ideally, it should open from the front and have the ability for the top to be easily removed. Carrier etiquette begins far before the day of your cat's appointment. It is best to keep the carrier out in a place that is frequented by your cat so he or she does not become stressed or anxious at the sight of the carrier. You can keep toys, treats, or blankets in the carrier so your cat learns to see it as familiar and non-threatening.

Pheromone Signals Cats have a small gland, called the vomeronasal gland, on the roof of their mouth that processes pheromone signals. If you have ever seen your cat smelling something with his or her mouth slightly open, he or she is most likely using the

vomeronasal gland to process pheromones! How does this relate to getting your cat to the veterinary clinic? There is a product called Feliway that is a synthetic version of the feline cheek pheromone. When cats rub their cheek up against something, they are leaving behind a pheromone that marks that object as "ok" or "safe". Feliway is a product that you can use in and around your cat's carrier to send a calming pheromone



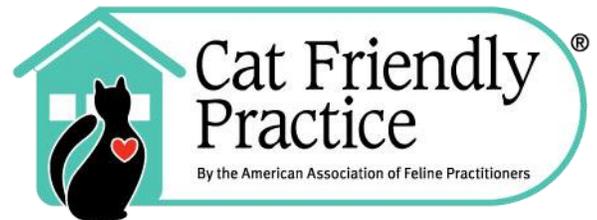
message. It comes in a diffuser that plugs into the wall, a portable spray, and wipes. For use with a cat carrier, we recommend using the wipes to spread the pheromone on the inside surfaces of the carrier, as well as the spray to infuse pheromone into the blankets on the bottom of the carrier. It is also useful to spray a towel with the Feliway spray and drape that over the carrier to provide the pheromone message as well as giving your cat a sense of privacy/safety by blocking out external stimuli.

Pre-medication Many times, traveling to the veterinary clinic is the only time cats ever leave home. To make the experience less stressful for cats, we offer the option to give a single dose of a sedative medication 1-2 hours prior to traveling to the vet clinic. This can make the entire experience much less stressful for your cat. If your cat expresses stress or anxiety with aggression, having a sedative medication on board prior to the appointment can allow the veterinary staff to perform a more complete and thorough exam. Please let us know if you are interested in picking up a dose of sedative medication prior to your cat's next veterinary visit.

WE ARE A CAT FRIENDLY PRACTICE

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) recognizes Country Hills Pet Hospital as being a certified Cat Friendly practice! This means that we

take specific steps to recognize the unique needs of our feline friends. See the blog post on our website for more information on what it means to be a Cat Friendly Practice.



Straight Into the Exam Room When you and your cat arrive to the clinic, we have you go directly into an exam room. This way, cats don't have to sit in the waiting area where there are dogs and a lot of commotion. In the exam room, they can acclimate to their surroundings before they are examined by the veterinarian.

Feline-Only Exam Rooms We have two dedicated feline-only exam rooms at Country Hills Pet Hospital. This prevents dog pheromones and smells from lingering in the exam room and causing your cat unnecessary stress.

Pheromone Signals We use the Feliway spray (described above) in our cat exam rooms prior to each appointment. This provides that calming pheromone message to help give your cat a sense of peace and tranquility.

Feline-Only Hospitalization Area In the case that your cat needs to spend the night or be hospitalized, he or she will be housed in our feline-only hospitalization ward that has comfortable housing and is free of barking dogs.