

PREPARING YOUR DOG FOR VET VISITS

Veterinary visits are a must—but the stress your pet feels doesn't have to be. With some thoughtful prep, you can turn a stressful outing into a (nearly) pleasant one.

Taking your dog to the vet can be stressful for both of you, but with the right preparation, you can help your furry friend feel more comfortable and relaxed during the visit. Here's how to make the experience as smooth as possible.



START EARLY WITH POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS



If possible, try to get your dog familiar with the vet's office before an actual appointment. Many veterinary clinics allow visits where pets can explore the space, meet staff, and receive treats without undergoing any procedures. This helps build positive associations with the environment.

PRACTICE HANDLING



Since vets will examine your dog physically, get your pup used to being touched in ways similar to a vet's exam. Gently massage or handle their paws, ears, tail, belly, and mouth at home, rewarding them with praise and treats. This helps desensitize them to the process and therefore reduces their anxiety.

USE REWARDS AND COMFORT ITEMS



Bring your dog's favorite treats or toys to the appointment. Reward them during the visit for calm behavior, reinforcing the idea that the exam room is a safe place. A favorite blanket or item that smells like you or home can also provide comfort.

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KEEP YOUR OWN ENERGY CALM



Dogs really do pick up on their owners' emotions, so staying relaxed is essential. Speak in a calm and reassuring voice and avoid making a fuss. If your dog senses that you're anxious, they may feel the same way.

GRADUAL EXPOSURE TO CAR RIDES



If your dog gets nervous in the car, take short, enjoyable trips beforehand to build positive experiences with car travel. Reward them with treats and praise, gradually increasing the distance.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT VET



A clinic with a pet-friendly, gentle approach can make all the difference. Some vets specialize in fear-free techniques, which focus on reducing anxiety for animals.

Taking the time to prepare your dog for vet visits isn't just about making things easier in the moment, it's an important part of their long-term health and well-being. A calm, cooperative pet is easier to examine and treat, which means they'll get better care with less stress.

By taking these steps, you're not just preparing your dog for vet visits—you're building trust, strengthening your bond, and helping ensure your pup gets the care they need with as little anxiety as possible.