



Preparing Your Dog

For a visit to the Veterinarian

VISITING YOUR VETERINARIAN is important in keeping your dog healthy and happy. It is an important part of being a responsible pet owner. Sometimes our dogs feel frightened or overwhelmed by the experience. Let's make sure that doesn't happen by following these simple steps:

FAMILIARIZE YOUR DOG WITH A PERSON'S TOUCH. MAKE HIM FEEL COMFORTABLE WHEN EXAMINED.

Guide your dog to a quiet room and put him on a high table. Approach him from the front and gently touch his neck and then his ears. Rub his back and slowly feel his belly, pushing in slightly. Rub his paws and ears. Lift his tail. Calmly grasp his joints while slowly rubbing them. Have him open his mouth and have him allow you to place your hand on his tongue, his teeth, and his gums. Never lean completely over him and always try to stand tall while you are keeping passive eye contact with him.

If you feel him stiffening up or hear him starting to growl, stop immediately. Back away from him slowly and calmly wait for about two or three minutes. After that, slowly approach him and slightly extend the back side of your hand towards his chest. Always watch his face and body for signs of fear or uncertainty.

THE CAR RIDE SHOULD BE A HAPPY AND BONDING TIME.

Take your dog for car rides as often as you can. Make sure that he is always properly secured in the back seat in a car carrier or harness attached to a seat belt restraint. Take him to pick up the kids at school, to visit a friend, to the pet store, for play time at the dog park, etc. Make it a fun and enjoyable experience. Take him to the Vet Clinic too, but just don't go in. Park in front and give him a treat. Walk him around to smell the flowers and mark his spot (always be considerate and pick up after him). Make sure the car is a "happy place".

SOCIALIZE AT THE VET CLINIC.

Take your dog to the vet clinic for brief visits prior to your "real appointment". Introduce him to the clinic when it is quiet so that he can get used to the new sounds and smells without the distraction of a waiting room full of other dogs, cats, etc. Let him meet and play with the vet staff. This allows him to understand that they aren't going to hurt him and allows your dog to familiarize himself with the body language and smells of the staff members. Perform some simple vet hospital activities such as having a staff member put him on a scale, walk him back to an examining room, and even place him on an examination table. Bring some of his favorite treats and have a staff member give him one when you leave. If he bonds with one staff member more than the others, try to have that staff member available when he comes for his "real appointment".

TIME FOR THE "REAL VET APPOINTMENT".

Unless otherwise instructed by the Veterinarian, minimize any food you give to your dog before you go for your appointment. This minimizes the possibility of accidents. Exercise him before you go so that his adrenaline is already drained. Make the car ride to the vet a calm and peaceful one.

Stay relaxed and unconcerned throughout the visit. Your dog can sense and react to your feelings. If you stay calm, it will help him to stay calm too. Remember that your dog looks towards you to provide his security.

Keep your dog on a short leash so that you can easily control him and his focus. Sit away from other animals to avoid unnecessary confrontation. If he shows any signs of fear, uncertainty, or aggression, muzzle him for everyone's peace of mind. If he is a small dog, think of having him in his car carrier so he remains "in his happy place".

LET YOUR DOG KNOW HE DID A GREAT JOB.

After the vet visit, take your dog somewhere fun to play and to reward him.