



A Cats Clinic Visit – Starts at Home



Cats love routine, predictability and are happiest in their familiar home environment. Going outside these parameters may cause stress and anxiety in your cat, especially taking a trip to the veterinary clinic. Let's aim to create a positive transport experience for them.

Type of carrier – a home away from home

A carrier can be 'soft' or made of rigid plastic and should have at least two openings for easy access for your cat, and/or with a removeable top.



The carrier should be considered as part of the furniture, so it is familiar to your cat, located in a preferred cat resting place – where ideally your cat chooses it as one of its 'hideaway places'

The carrier should be 'cosy'; large enough so your cat can move around, but not too large that your cat will fall about when being moved.



Carriers should be easy to clean and should always smell familiar to your cat. The use of pheromone spray (15 mins prior) will help calm cats in transit.

Car safety - for a pleasant trip

Cats will react to car journeys in different ways. They should always travel in a carrier and separate carriers if you have a multi-pet household

- To avoid motion sickness, do not feed your cat for 1-2 hours prior to travel.
- Carry the carrier with both hands, so as not to jostle your cat
- Cover the carrier with a familiar smelling towel so they feel more secure
- Secure the carrier with a seatbelt, or place in the footwell. Drive carefully and gently
- Play soft music in the car (classical is ideal) stay calm and be reassuring. Calmly chat to your cat!
- Some cats may exhibit stress reactions such as vocalisation, elimination or panting, sweating and drooling... its always advisable to bring extra bedding. (if severe, ask your vet for travel medication)
- Use of a pheromone spray (Feliway®) will help calm your cat

Returning home – familiar ground...

- In a multi-pet household, be mindful that your cat will have picked up different smells, therefore, place in a different room to re-acclimatise and gently reintroduce and counter condition with food treats.

Cat carrier training – a step by step guide

All cats are unique, acclimate your cat to their carrier with patience, repetition over several sessions at your cats' own pace and reward with treats. Only move to the next level when they are relaxed and comfortable!

- Select a familiar blanket and place near the bottom half of the carrier. Reward your cat when he/she is on the blanket, aiming for a relaxed cat. Gradually over time move the blanket closer to the carrier. Once your cat has a positive association with the blanket – place in the bottom of the carrier. Entice your cat in - with treats / toys and reward, stroke, reassure. Build up sessions so your cat relaxed in the carrier facing forward and remaining for 3-5 mins.



- Add the top of the carrier (without the door) and repeat the routine by feeding treats through the ventilation grids and /or using a rod toy, with the aim that your cat will turn and remain in the carrier, relaxed, and facing forward.



- Add the door to the carrier, allow your cat to investigate it and repeat sessions to entice your cat into the carrier. By this stage the cat should willingly go in and out. Gently close the door – reward with treats and open again, repeat and gradually close the door for longer periods. When your cat is comfortable – latch the door, and open. Your cat should come out of the carrier calmly and quietly... do not fuss your cat too much when exiting, as the reward is for the cat to be inside the carrier.



- With the door shut practice carefully lifting the carrier and placing down, use both hands to stabilise. This can be increased to moving the cat from room to room, and if you have access to the garden – outside.



Images from iCatCare