

## BETTER FOR YOUR PET, BETTER FOR YOU: HOW FEAR FREE IS CHANGING VETERINARY VISITS

For many pets and their owners, going to the veterinarian can cause feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress.

Stressful veterinary visits are problematic for pets, pet owners, and veterinary healthcare team members. That's why Dr. Marty Becker, "America's Veterinarian," founded a certification program - called Fear Free - that helps veterinary healthcare professionals learn how to make visits to the vet something pets and their owners can both look forward to.

## WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE FEAR FREE CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS ON OUR TEAM

We've always worked hard to provide the best care for your pets. Now, we know that there are ways to make your pet's healthcare even better. We're proud that our team members are evolving with veterinary medicine and are committed to looking after both your pet's physical and emotional well-being.

The Fear Free mission is to prevent and alleviate fear, anxiety, and stress in pets by inspiring and educating the people who care for them.

[www.fearfreepets.com](http://www.fearfreepets.com)



*"I was so pleased to see the way they have changed up their patient treatment and embraced the Fear Free philosophy at our vet. Instead of putting your babies on that cold table, they now get down on the floor with them, making them feel more at ease. My little girl was so relaxed and more trusting; Dr. Primm gave her two injections and she didn't even know it!" - Linda White, McDonald, Tennessee*

*"A Fear Free trip to the vet is our English Bulldog, Rowdy's, absolute favorite thing to do. We just have to whisper the words, "Dr Bloom," and he runs to door beyond excited! As soon as he scampers through the doors, the staff are so warm and welcoming you would think he was about to spend the day at the spa, not about to have a physical exam or a vaccination!" - Stephanie Gagne, Toronto, Canada*

*"My 12-year-old old Exotic Shorthair cat, Pete, has been terrified of the vet since an eye surgery several years ago. When I contacted White Bear Animal hospital about an appointment, they immediately suggested a preventive calming medication to reduce his stress. The lobby is set up to reduce stress from the first moment... and in the exam room, they always have some kind of soft blanket so that the animals aren't associating the feeling of the slippery, cold table with the vet exam. I am grateful that I am now able to take him in without having to weigh whether the stress from the exam would make things worse. The Fear Free techniques are a game changer." - Shannon Dietz, White Bear Lake, Minnesota*

Love how your pet is responding to our Fear Free techniques? Tell your friends and family! Want to learn more about our Fear Free certified team members? Contact our office!

Thank you to our Fear Free Sponsors



## A BETTER WAY

The #1 reason pet owners don't take pets to the vet is because of stress to the pet. With Fear Free Veterinary Visits, "We Take the Pet Out of Petrified."





## The Signs of Stress

Your pet is hiding. She's not napping, she's scared! Many signs of fear, anxiety, and stress in pets are difficult to detect. Here are some of the most common signs that your pet might be feeling less than calm and content.

**TAIL DOWN, TUCKED, OR HIGH OVER THE BACK** **CLOSENESS TO YOU OR CLIMBING UP ON YOU** **PANTING** **FIDGETING** **TREMBLING** **YAWNING** **PACING** **WHINING, GROWLING,** **PILORECTION (HAIR UP)** **SNARLING, HYPERVIGILANCE OR BITING** **LUNGING** **(looking around everywhere, seemingly paranoid)** **DILATED PUPILS** **LICKING LIPS, OR LIPS DRAWN BACK** **TURNING AWAY WHEN YOU LOOK AT HIM, OR TURNING HIS BACK TO STIMULI** **HIDING** **AVOIDING VETERINARY TEAM MEMBERS**

## The Fear Free Veterinary Visit

During a typical Fear Free veterinary visit, the practice team members might use the following strategies:

- Initially avoid eye contact with your pet and focus on you instead
- Provide non-slip surfaces for your pet to stand or rest on to improve balance and enhance stability
- Use gentle pressure to soothe the pet using a towel or compression garment
- Create a calming environment with pheromone diffusers and aromatherapy
- Play calming music to ease tension and promote relaxation
- Actively work to reduce stressful noises
- Create a relaxing environment through calming hospital colors and gentle lighting
- Prescribe anti-anxiety or other calming medications & supplements
- If your pet is showing excessive signs of fear, anxiety, or stress, the team may delay or postpone the exam or other procedures until a time when the pet is calmer and more relaxed



## Five Ways You Can Help Make the Veterinary Visit Fear Free for Your Pet



### Prep your pet

Positively accustom the pet to her carrier or restraint device and condition happy experiences in the vehicle.



### Limit food before the appointment unless medically contraindicated

Bringing pets in hungry increases the reward value of food during the visit to better condition the pet to the positives of care.



### Explore waiting room alternatives

Work with the receptionist or other team members to determine the optimal location to wait with your pet prior to care.



### Be open to non-traditional techniques

This can include not taking the pet's temperature, examining the pet in your lap or on the floor and using treat and toy coaxers to move animals willingly onto the scale, into the exam room and onto the table.



### Consider proven, new strategies to reduce fear, anxiety, and stress in your pet

In many cases, pets will benefit tremendously from pre-visit medications, supplements or sedatives, as well as conditioning the pet to aspects of vet care prior to their next visit.