



PREPARING YOUR DOG *or* PUPPY



for a visit to the **VETERINARIAN**



Visiting your veterinarian is essential to keeping your dog healthy and happy, and it is an important part of being a responsible pet owner. However, a routine checkup can sometimes be distressing to our canine companions.

When you consider what a vet visit entails, you can begin to appreciate why your dog may become so overwhelmed and (sometimes) hard to control. Not only will he encounter dozens of new smells, but he may also hear barking dogs, meowing cats and strange voices. He may be handled by vet staff in unfamiliar ways that could add to his apprehension.

Help your dog feel more relaxed and even enjoy his vet visits by following these tips:

- Take the dog to the vet clinic for brief visits prior to your appointment. Introduce him to the clinic when it's quiet to get him used to the smells and sounds of the new environment so it won't be entirely strange to him when you actually go for the exam. Let him meet the wonderful people who work there; have the staff give him a treat and place him on a scale; and allow him to sniff the exam room. A few visits like this will help him to associate the vet clinic with a positive experience.
- At home, during quiet times, you can help your dog become comfortable with being handled for a medical examination. Gently pat him on different areas of his body while he is in a relaxed state. Mimic how the vet will examine your dog—touch around his eyes and ears, gently hold his feet and toes (which also helps alleviate his fear of nail clipping), lift his lips and touch his teeth, gently move his legs, etc. Take your time with this kind of touch, and do it often so that it becomes an agreeable experience for your dog both at home and at the vet.
- Some dogs never go anywhere in the car except to the vet. Thus, a dog may begin to associate a car ride with visiting the vet and may begin to worry the moment you put him in the car. To prevent this anxiety, do some practice drives. Take him somewhere fun, so he learns that a ride in the car can end in a pleasurable destination.
- Exercise your dog before the vet visit. A tired dog is more relaxed and easier to manage.
- Throughout the visit, stay relaxed and unconcerned. Your dog can sense your feelings, and you need to remain calm so he can feel calm. Remember, your dog looks to you for his safety and security.
- Keep your dog on a short lead while in the waiting area and maintain control of him throughout your visit to avoid any stress, injury or altercations with other pets. If he shows any signs of aggression toward dogs or humans, be sure to have him muzzled for everyone's safety.
- If you have a small dog, take him into the clinic in his carrier. He'll feel more comfortable being in his familiar space, with his blanket, toys, etc.
- After the vet visit, take your dog somewhere fun to play and to reward him.

Your veterinarian and clinic staff will also appreciate you taking the time to ensure your dog is calm and comfortable during his visit.

