



# Cat Friendly Practice Program

## In Sickness and in Health: Caring For Your Cat

### Cat Friendly Practices—Creating a Lifetime of Healthy Felines

By \_\_\_\_\_

INSERT NAME AND PRACTICE NAME HERE

Cats are the clear pet of choice, with many more owned cats than dogs. Yet, when it comes to a cat's health, we don't always treat them the same. Cats may be number one in a pet owner's heart, but dogs seem to receive more consistent and regular veterinary health care. Surprisingly, cat wellness and veterinary care do not appear to be as high of a priority among cat owners.

Consider this:

- Almost twice as many cats than dogs never visit the veterinarian\*
- Of the cats that do visit the veterinarian, they average 26 percent fewer visits than dogs\*

In order to improve the health and well-being of cats, the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) has initiated the Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) program. More info can be found at [www.catvets.com/cat-owners](http://www.catvets.com/cat-owners).

#### Navigating the Veterinary Visit

Stress is one of the top reasons for lack of or skipped visits for cats. Owners report that the stress of transporting their pets to the veterinarian, along with the cat's reluctance to enter the carrier or a new and unfamiliar environment, causes anxiety for cats and their owners. Both feel anxiety and stress before they even set foot in the office. Once in the office, there are other potential stressors including dogs or other cats in the waiting area, staff who do not know how to handle cats, and a canine-focused environment. CFPs are the antidote to the stressful veterinary visit for cats.

#### CFPs Elevate Standard of Care

CFPs are sensitive to cats' distinct characteristics and equipped to address their physical and behavioral needs, thereby increasing cat owner knowledge, veterinary visits and ultimately improving the health care of cats by educating on the importance of wellness visits and preventive care.

Veterinarians and their team members who have achieved CFP status regard the practice with an entirely new perspective. The practice must train staff on the distinct needs of cats and assess their physical environment, as well as the delivery of medical care provided. Each CFP has at least one designated 'Cat Advocate' on staff – a knowledgeable professional leader who ensures feline-focused standards are met and followed.

#### What to Expect From a CFP?

CFPs consider the unique obstacles cats battle in the waiting and examination rooms, handling of feline patients, attitude and knowledge of staff, and the comfort and concern for cats and their owners. At a CFP-designated clinic, pet owners will experience cat-friendly features such as:

- **Skilled staff** — Within a CFP, clients will find that the staff is well-versed in feline-friendly handling techniques and can expertly treat frightened cats. Furthermore, the staff is well-trained in alternate techniques to calm an anxious cat and ensure that examinations and procedures do not escalate anxiety.
- **Individualized health care plan** — As with humans, health issues change as aging occurs. The practice will create a health care plan that is specific to your cat. Getting yearly check-ups, and often more than once a year for older cats, can help a condition or disease so it can be treated early on.
- **Low-stress environment** — One obvious advantage of a CFP is a physical environment that is all about the cat including special waiting rooms or waiting accommodations, feline-sensitive examination rooms and ward facilities, and equipment for cats.

Other areas that are vetted for cat safety and comfort include the operating room and anesthesia, diagnostic imaging, laboratory facilities, and dentistry.

#### Finding a Cat Friendly Practice

The decision to seek out a CFP is an important step. As humans, we take great care in searching for health providers who meet our needs. Now, with the CFP program, it just got a lot easier to find a veterinary practice that is expertly suited to address your cat's unique needs and to provide you with advice and information that is critical to your cat's health.

Cat Friendly Practices are listed on the AAFP website at [www.catvets.com](http://www.catvets.com).

Insert practice information here:

\_\_\_\_\_ is CFP designated.  
(YOUR VETERINARY PRACTICE)

For more information or to speak with our Cat Advocate, contact us at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(PHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAIL ADDRESS)

\*Source: (2011 Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study research)



A Program Offered by the  
American Association of Feline Practitioners