



Anxious or Fear Aggressive Behavior

Let's be honest. Not every pet is happy to be taking a trip to the veterinary clinic. Anxious or fear aggressive behavior displayed towards owners, other pets, or veterinary staff is understandable. Many pets do not contact new people or other animals on a regular basis. So, this abrupt introduction to new individuals can evoke a fear response, sometimes manifesting in growling, barking, cowering in a corner, or even lunging in dogs and hissing, swatting, growling, or hiding behaviors in cats. At Ely Veterinary Care (EVC), we want to make your pet as comfortable as possible during their visit. If you suspect that your pet will be nervous and/or possibly display some fear aggressive behaviors during their visit, please see the pre-appointment suggestions listed below:

Pre-Appointment Suggestions for Anxious and Fearful Pets:

- Dogs:
 - **Bring your dog to us for "happy visits"** prior to your scheduled appointment. "Happy visits" consist of us weighing your dog, giving them treats, and petting them if they allow us to do so. This helps to associate our facility with "good" things.
 - **Take your dog on car rides to places that he/she may enjoy**, such as a walk on BLM land, playing fetch in the park, visiting a family member, etc. This helps to associate the car with "good" things as well.
 - **Spray yourself, your car, and your dog carrier with Adaptil.** This spray contains calming pheromones to help your dog cope with potentially stressful situations. Adaptil can be purchased on our online or in-house pharmacies.
- Cats:
 - Place your cat's carrier in a common area in your home where your cat can see it, smell it, and get in and out of it. This will **help them become acclimated to the carrier** and associate it with a part of their normal environment.
 - On the day of your cat's appointment, you can **spray yourself, the carrier, blankets in the carrier, and your car with Feliway spray.** Feliway spray contains natural pheromones which help to make your cat more comfortable and less anxious. This spray can also be purchased via our online or in-house pharmacies.

Some pets are still anxious and afraid even after taking these pre-appointment measures. If this is true for your pet, we will prescribe some oral medications to help ease their anxiety and stress. Before we can prescribe these medications, your pet must be up-to-date on their annual exam so that we can be compliant with the Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship



(VCPR) standards set forth by federal and state laws. This exam will be a limited one if your pet is very anxious and possibly fear aggressive, which is why we would like to see your pet back for a more complete exam after your pet takes some calming medications. Please see the calming protocol below for your pet:

Calming Protocol Recommended Prior to Next Appointment:

- Dogs:
 - 12 hours before appointment:
 - **Gabapentin** _____ mg capsules - _____ capsule(s) by mouth
 - 1.5 – 2 hours before appointment:
 - **Gabapentin** _____ mg capsules - _____ capsule(s) by mouth

AND

- **Trazodone** _____ mg tablets - _____ tablet(s) by mouth
- Cats:
 - 12 hours before appointment:
 - **Gabapentin** _____ mg/ml liquid - _____ ml(s) by mouth
 - 1.5 – 2 hours before appointment:
 - **Gabapentin** _____ mg/ml liquid - _____ ml(s) by mouth

These medications can also be used prior to grooming visits, road trips, or other situations in which your pet may become anxious. On occasion, some pets will still be extremely anxious despite being given the above medications. In these cases, we use our best judgment to decide if injectable sedation is necessary and appropriate based on the pet's current condition and needs.

If you feel as though your pet is anxious all the time (not just at the veterinary clinic) or displaying other behavioral issues, your pet may need a behavioral consult. At EVC, we can schedule a remote session with a veterinary behavioralist through our reference laboratory consulting service. After this consult, the behavioralist may recommend specific training tactics or a certain medication protocol tailored to your pet's diagnosis and needs. For questions concerning your pet's behavior, please reach out to us by phone or email. We are here to help!

*Our online pharmacy link for ordering Adaptil or Feliway Spray can be located here:
<https://elyvetcarepllc.securevetsource.com/index.pml>