



## Four Ways to Help Your Dog Enjoy Going to the Vet

### **1. Work on your dog's "Sensitive Areas"**

While at the vet, your dog will need to be touched all over. A vet will need to:

- Touch your dog's feet/toes
- Look in your dog's ears
- Open your dog's mouth
- Hold your dog's tail
- Have your dog lie on its side

Teach your dog that being touched and handled is wonderful. Practice all these things at home and reward your dog for it. Remember to start slowly. You want your dog to enjoy being handled, so if your dog seems uncomfortable, back off and start again more slowly.

### **2. Have Other People Handle Your Dog:**

At the vet's office, your dog will be touched and handled by people your dog may not know.

You can have friends or family members practice the "sensitive areas" handling with your dog. Have them ask your dog to do easy commands, such as "sit" or "shake;" or have them gently pet your dog's ears or feet. Never reprimand your dog if he does not listen or acts uncomfortable. Remember, the important thing is that your dog learn to enjoy people handling him.

### **3. Teach Useful Commands:**

Dogs often need to be in a sitting or lying down position for the vet. They must also walk nicely past new people and dogs. A dog that can do these things on command will have a better experience at the vet, and the staff will greatly appreciate it! The most important skills for your dog to be able to perform are:

- Sitting
- Lying down
- Walking nicely on a leash

It is important for your dog to be able to do these things around distractions, as well as in the relative quiet of your house.

### **4. Use "Happy Visits" to Ease the Pain:**

Vet visits can be overwhelming and painful. A vet's office is full of new people, unfamiliar animals, and strange sights and smells. Many things that must happen at a vet's office are unpleasant or painful. If the only time your dog visits the vet is to get shots or when he is sick, he may start to associate the vet with bad things.

However, if your dog visits the vet's office regularly, and most of the time good things happen, then it will not matter if occasionally the vet gives your dog a shot. Stop by the vet's office with your dog as often as you can for "happy" visits. Feed your dog treats while in the waiting area, or see if the staff can feed your dog treats. If the clinic is not busy on your visits, staff can even take our dog to the treatment area for treats.

Please [contact us](#) for more information about socialization and health care for your new addition. Provided by [UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine](#). Further Reading: American Veterinary Society for Animal Behavior, [www.avsabonline.org](http://www.avsabonline.org)