

Welcome to a Cat Friendly Practice

A Guide for Cat Owners

What is the AAFP Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) Program?

The AAFP seeks to encourage and facilitate excellence in veterinary care for cats. However, we recognize that there are unique challenges and difficulties in bringing a cat to a veterinary practice, including:

- Cats often do not like the carrier and do not travel well.
- Cats do not feel safe when they are away from their normal home territory.
- Cats are highly sensitive to unusual sights, sounds and smells.
- Most cats are highly susceptible to stress and anxiety.
- Most cats are highly stressed by dogs and other cats being in close proximity at the practice.
- Cats need to be handled gently, with care and respect in the practice.
- Cats have unique medical requirements that Cat Friendly Practices are capable of addressing.

This program was created to help practices address these challenges to create a positive experience for you and your cat.

The AAFP created the Cat Friendly Practice Program to help practitioners meet the wide range of unique needs of cats in a veterinary practice setting. An extensive self-assessment checklist was designed to demonstrate that Cat Friendly Practices:

- Understand the unique needs of cats and have made veterinary visits more cat friendly.
- Understand how to approach and handle cats in a gentle, empathetic and caring manner.
- Have an appropriate standard of equipment needed to investigate and treat feline diseases.
- Meet a standard for facilities and care for hospitalized cats.

There are specific criteria that your veterinarian and practice staff have had to meet in order to become a Cat Friendly Practice. They have taken this information and applied it to how they practice and interact with cats. They have met a standard of practice including the environment, equipment, handling, and treatment of cats that has been determined by leaders in the field of feline medicine.

What Does the CFP Status Mean to You?

The Cat Friendly Practice Standard lets you know that the practice has achieved certain standards and that the practice staff understands the specific needs of cats.

A Cat Friendly Practice is committed to learning ways to make the visit more pleasant for your cats and to help you learn ways that you can contribute also. A Cat Friendly Practice has created an environment that is less threatening to cats and meets the cat's unique needs. The staff at this practice is aware of ways they can interact and handle your cat so that examinations and procedures will be less stressful. A Cat Friendly Practice also values your contribution to your cat's healthcare plan and will make every effort to help you understand your cat's needs and help you learn what you can do at home to ensure that they get the care they need.

Each practice also has at least one 'Cat Advocate' who is a member of the staff that ensures the cat friendly standards are adhered to and who would be happy to answer any of your questions.



How Did the Practice Obtain the CFP Standard?

Practices complete a self-assessment checklist by utilizing a variety of educational resources. There are two levels to the program – Silver and Gold. Full details of the requirements for an AAFP Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) can be found on the website (www.catvets.com) along with a searchable database of CFP practices. Below are the crucial elements that are achieved by Cat Friendly Practices.

- ✓ Premises are of a good clinical standard.
- ✓ Staff are knowledgeable about and understand cats.
- ✓ Staff have a gentle, caring and empathetic approach to handling cats.
- ✓ The practice has a cat friendly waiting room and examination room.
- ✓ The practice has the ability to hospitalize cats in a comfortable setting to meet their unique needs.
- ✓ The practice has appropriate equipment for cats including anesthesia and X-ray.

