Becoming a Cat Friendly Practice
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In collaboration with The American Association of Feline Practitioners and Cat Friendly Practice

AAHA gratefully acknowledges Pfizer Animal Health, CEVA Animal Health and Hill’s Pet Nutrition for their sponsorship of this web conference.

Oh Where, Oh Where Have Our Feline Friends Gone?

- 41% visit only for vaccines
- 39% would only visit in illness
- 60% report cat “hates” the visit
- 38% get stressed thinking about


Cats See Us Less

- 86 million vs. 78 million dogs
- Twice as many cats don’t see a veterinarian
- Of those that visit, 26% fewer times

Client Perception
- Don’t see need
- Don’t like how we treat their beloved cat
- Dislike their role as “capturer”
- Dislike pre-visit experience, carrier and car
- Embarrassed by their cat’s behaviors
- Fear the return home

Cat Perception
- Forceful handling at home
- Betrayal of owner
- Lack of control
- Strangers, smells
- Stress, fear, and pain

Staff Perception
- Cat visits take too much time
- Unpredictable animal
- Don’t know how to read
- Potential injury
- Lost opportunities
Lost Opportunity

- Wellness care
- Early disease detection and preventative care
- Building trust
- Protection of life
- Enhanced welfare
- Increased cat visits

How Do You Increase Patient Visits?

*Put out the Welcome Mat...*

Welcome
We are a Cat Friendly Practice

What You May Know, May Not Equal What Your Cat Clients Know

Educate

Educate

Educate!
Understand Cats and Their Behavior

- Territorial
- Solitary hunter
- Communication
- Behavior cues

Territorial

- Rarely leave home
- Resource dependent
- Social groups are naturally females
- Males on the periphery
- Social structure is a recent development
- Outside contact kept to a minimum

Solitary Survivors

- No hierarchy
- No need for cooperation
- No concept of "turn taking"
- No submissive behaviors
- Control environment
- Security = no surprises
Communication

- Tactile
- Maintain social groups
- Affiliative

Olfactory

- Long range and across time
- Unseen
- Not always accurate
- Cannot be modified – email
- Spacing of cats
- Avoid confrontation
- Rubbing, scratching, middening, spraying

Visual

- Medium range
- Changes rapidly
- Increase distance between cats
- Posture = first impression
- Facial = fine tuning
- Emotional state
- Not always honest
Visual Cues

- Arched back
- Crouch
- Tail
- Facial expression
- Ears
- Whiskers
- Pupils
- Vocalization

Teach Clients
Social Group vs. Multi-cat Household

- Allogrooming
- Allorubbing
- Sleeping in contact

Sharing Territory

- Adequate resources
- Privacy
- Ability to escape
Household Stress = Forced Sharing

- Common feeding times
- Restricted access to water
- Shared latrines
- Physical space

Sickness Behaviors in Healthy Cats

- 12 healthy cats
- 20 donated with FIC
- Single observer
- Response to unusual external events
- No difference in sickness behavior between healthy and FIC

- Most common was elimination
- Age increased risk
- Resolved with predictability and enrichment

STUDY: Sickness behaviors in response to unusual external events in healthy cats and cats with feline interstitial cystitis. Stella, Lord, Buffington. JAVMA Vol. 238, No. 1, January 2011

Social Contact

- Socialize in early stages, 2 – 7 weeks of age
- Requirement varies among cats
- Low intensity/high frequency
- Opposite of humans
- May lead to increased # of cats
- Social incompatibility = stress
- Owner expectations may be unrealistic
**Normal feeding**

- Prevent obesity
- Small frequent – mouse size
- Require work, exploration to eat
- Different feeding times and spaces for different social groups

**Hunting and Play**

- Play mimics hunting
- Crucial for health and well being

**Reversing the Trend: Increasing Cat Visits**

1) Household Cat Inventory
2) Educate, educate, educate
3) Cat friendly
4) Safe transport
5) Handling and exams
6) Know your cat health care
7) Payment options
Becoming Cat Friendly... is Not a Construction Project

- “Everyone here has the sense that right now is one of those moments when we are influencing the future.”
  Steve Jobs
- “Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”
  W. Churchill
- “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”
  B. Franklin
- “Trust that little voice in your head that says ‘Wouldn’t it be interesting if...’ And then do it.”
  D. Michaels

The AAFP Cat Friendly Practice Encourages More Feline Appointments

- Advocate
- Professional development
- Design, layout, & equipment

Practice Practice

- First Impressions
- Client Education
- Feline Friendly Handling
- Staff Training and Education
- Environment and Equipment
First Impressions Count!
Cat Friendly Practice Begin at “Hello”

• Begin on the phone
• Prepping is key
• Perform a “stress analysis”
• Share the knowledge

Making the Practice Cat Friendly
Waiting Room/Reception

• Quiet!!
• Avoid visual contact
• Cats & dogs take your corners
• Separate egress and appointments
• Step right in
Knock, Knock...
Removing the Cat from the Carrier

- An open door policy
- No grabbing, pulling or shaking!
- Reach in, provide support
- They can’t fear what they don’t see
- Minimize fear
- Empty carriers should be out of sight

The reluctant cat:
- Cover cat and remove carrier top
- Examine from the bottom of the cage

Carrier Comfort

- Open door
- Allow to explore
- Motivated to return
- Put it away
Reluctant Patients

FEAR is the #1 cause of bad behavior in the veterinary practice!
Friendly Feline Handling

- Road rules
- Calm down
- A gentle touch
- Safety and security
- Throw in the towel
- Three’s a crowd
- Describe

Great Resource: AAFP Handling Guidelines & “Getting Your Cat to the Veterinarian” Brochure
www.catvets.com/guidelines
Friendly Feline Handling
Friendly Feline Handling

Examination Room

- Clean and airy
- Felines only!
- Perks
- Batten down the hatches
- The hole story
- Feliway
- The right stuff
- Keep talking
- Take it slow

Exam Options
Examination

Client Communication/Education

- Explain to the client what you are doing
- It is important that they understand
- Communication will build trust

Assess Every Step
Avoid the Back

Cats in Hospital
- Feeding schedules
- Brand loyalty
- Acting out
- Leave the blankie
- Special handling
- A weighty issue
- Small is good
- One at a time

Hiding Places
Gentle Nursing

Gentle Nursing

Cat Friendly Wards

- No dogs allowed!
- Keeping noise to a minimum
- Size and spacing
- Specs
- Control infection
- Patient identifications
Clean and Quiet

Additional Considerations to Create an Optimal Cat Friendly Environment

- Operating room/anesthesia
- Surgical equipment
- Dental tools
- Diagnostic imaging
- Laboratory facilities

Intrigued? Overwhelmed?

The AAFP has:
- Coordinated information
- Created a new paradigm for cat care
- Introduced The Cat Friendly Practice

The tools and information will:
- Transform your practice
- Improve feline health care and well being
- Increase feline visits
The Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) Program Benefits Both Practices and Cat Owners by:

- Explaining the clinical and commercial benefits of being cat friendly
- Providing easy to adopt information
- Encouraging cat owners to seek out AAFP Cat Friendly Practices (the core message)

How Does the Program Work?

- AAFP Member
- Identify a cat advocate
- Review checklist
- Assess your practice
- Use educational materials
- Submit for approval

The Practice Assessment Checklist

Details two distinct practice levels: Gold and Silver
Cat Friendly Practice Program

- Seeing the patient in a new light
- Assistance in making improvements
- The best information
- Effective Tools

*Most importantly, the program will increase cat wellness!*

Cat Friendly Practice Program Provides Toolkit

- Certificate
- Poster
- Brochure for Cat Owners
- How to Become a Media Expert
- Advertising Tips
- Sample Press Release/Article
- Sample Expert Source Article
- Sample Presentation
- Personalized Ad Slick
- Logo
- CFP Window Decal

Cat Friendly Practice Program Provides

AAFP national consumer awareness campaign will create demand!
Where Do I Start?

- Visit [www.catvets.com](http://www.catvets.com)
- Click on the Cat Friendly Practice Icon
- Sign in with your member login
- Not a Member? Visit [www.catvets.com/joinus](http://www.catvets.com/joinus)

Questions?

Questions to the Speaker

Please email your questions to webconference@aaahanet.org by Sunday, March 11, 2012.

Dr. Colleran will provide written responses to all of the questions and they will be posted on AAHA’s website by Friday, March 23, 2012.
1. To complete the evaluation, please go to the following website:
   http://www.keysurvey.com/survey/415065/1bb3/

2. After completing the evaluation, you will automatically be linked to the Continuing Education Certificate. The CE certificate can only be accessed after the evaluation is completed.

3. Download the CE Certificate (in PDF format) to your computer and print enough copies for those persons viewing the web conference with you.

Thank you for your participation!

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