

## waiting

- do not arrive too early to avoid unnecessarily long waiting and increasing stress levels
- wait in the car if possible
- bring someone who can help
  - and wait in the car with the dog so you can go inside to say you have arrived
  - after the visit to take the dog outside or to bring the dog to the car when you have to wait for medication, the bill or make a new appointment
- when entering, sit down in the waiting area as quickly, but calmly as possible
- always keep the dog on a leash and do not give him all the space to walk around, unless there is an opportunity; consult with the technician first

## in the vet's room

- once in the examination room let the dog off leash if possible and let him walk and sniff around while you talk to the vet

## ...and the dog?

- give the dog a choice
- if he does not want to sit or lie down, leave him standing
- due to the stress, he will be more restless
- **it is not an obedience exam**
- reassure your dog, talk quietly and gently and/or stroke him firmly and slowly (not on the head)

*Special thanks to:*

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# Etiquette at the vet

stress reducing advice for both dog and owner



# Etiquette at the vet

## stress reducing advice for both dog and owner

You can not escape it. Sooner or later your dog has to go to the vet. Perhaps only for a health check and vaccination, or sometimes in case of illness or surgery. In all cases it is an exciting moment for the dog. He will experience stress to a greater or lesser degree.

With a few simple rules and some advice you as an owner can make it easier for the dog. And not only for your own dog, but also for other animals and for the vet and technician.

the waiting area is not a doggy playground

the waiting area is not the place where you socialize your dog

keep your distance

Research\* has shown that more than 75% of dogs experience stress to a greater or lesser degree and show stress-related behavior when they visit the vet.

*\*Fear-related behaviour of dogs in veterinary practice  
- Döring, Roscher, Scheipl, Küchenhoff, Erhard - 2009*

don't let your dog approach other animals and don't do that yourself

- your dog or the other animal might have an infectious disease
- your dog or the other animal might feel sick
- your dog or the other animal is in pain
- your dog or the other animal is very scared of the vet
- your dog or the other animal is afraid of strangers, dogs or people
- the frontal, direct confrontation without evasive possibility is unusual in dog language

peace and calmness

- make sure you leave home in time, avoid rushing
- avoid any kind of excitement for the dog
- if the health of the dog allows it, make a quiet, short 'sniff' walk and prevent 'fast' activities just before the appointment
- make sure the dog sleeps enough and do calm activities a few days before the appointment
- as an owner try to remain calm; the dog easily registers your increased heart rate and accelerated breathing and will therefore become more restless and react more fearfully

preparation

- write down your questions for the vet
- bring high value treats
- ask your vet to visit his/her clinic when 'nothing is happening' so your dog can sniff around off leash and leave with a 'positive memory'
- use a separate harness for visits to the vet\*

\*Predictability lowers stress level.

To the dog, wearing that special harness means 'vet visit'. A dog wearing a collar may experience more stress, e.g. increased pressure on the trachea. Wearing a harness enables the dog to communicate better and more effectively, e.g. turning of the head (K. Shephard's Ladder of Agression, 2004).