

AAFP Position Statement

Respectful handling of cats to minimize fear and pain at the veterinary visit

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) strongly advises the gentle and respectful handling of cats to minimize their fear and pain (feline distress) exhibited in the veterinary practice. Considerate and respectful handling of cats promotes improved human–feline interaction safety.

It is the responsibility of the veterinary

profession to educate all who interact with cats (veterinary team, owners, caregivers, etc) about considerate and respectful handling that minimizes a cat's fear and pain. To minimize feline distress and create more positive veterinary visit experiences for the cat, their owner, and the veterinary team, it is critical for all who interact with cats to understand both normal cat

behavioral responses and body positions, and those associated with feline distress. As the veterinary visit begins in the home, it is critical that owners be educated on proper carrier size and carrier training. Within the veterinary practice, gentle and respectful feline patient handling techniques are core knowledge requirements to minimize feline distress.

The AAFP has educational resources available for veterinary professionals, team members and clients/caregivers:

- ✦ **AAFP and ISFM feline-friendly handling guidelines** catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/handling-guidelines
- ✦ **AAFP and ISFM feline-friendly nursing care guidelines** catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/nursing-care-guidelines
- ✦ **AAFP feline anesthesia guidelines** catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/anesthesia-guidelines
- ✦ **Getting your cat to the veterinarian** catvets.com/public/PDFs/ClientBrochures/Cat-to-VetHandout.pdf
- ✦ **AAFP feline-friendly handling webinar** catvets.com/education/online/webinars/feline-friendly-handling

This Position Statement is intended to update and replace the AAFP's earlier Position Statement 'Respectful handling of cats to prevent fear and pain', published July 2010.

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