

## Stressed Pets?

Think about your pet's last visit to the clinic. Did your dog start to shake and tremble as soon as they realized where they were going?

Did your cat serenade you during the drive to the clinic then attack your other cat when they got home? When your pet is stressed, it can raise your stress levels, which then increases your pet's stress levels. This vicious cycle can lead to miserable trips to the vet and eventually to putting off visits for medical care.

We want to provide all of our patients and their owners with a Fear Free Visit. This starts at home with teaching your pet to be comfortable with being touched and riding in their carrier and continues with Fear Free techniques for interacting with them in the building. Some pets do better with mild sedation and/or medications to reduce car sickness. If your veterinarian has suggested this, it is not because your pet is 'bad.' They are usually just frightened and don't understand that the visit with the vet keeps them healthy.

Taking a mild sedative before the visit can help reduce stress and gradually retrain your pet to see a visit to the clinic as a positive experience. For some pets, switching to a house call is a stress-free option. We all want the best for your pets, so ask us about the ways we can make every visit a positive, Fear Free experience.

## About Fear Free

All of our veterinarians and the majority of our Patient Care and Client Care Teams have been certified as Fear Free Professionals. This means that we are committed to providing you and your pets with a less stressful visit to the clinic.

Developed by "America's Veterinarian," Dr. Marty Becker, the Fear Free<sup>SM</sup> initiative aims to "take the 'pet' out of 'petrified'" and get pets back for veterinary visits by promoting considerate approach and gentle control techniques used in calming environments. Utilization of Fear Free methods and protocols leads to the reduction or removal of anxiety triggers, which creates an experience that is rewarding and safer for all involved, including pets, their owners, and veterinary health care teams.



## Commonly Prescribed Drugs in our Chill Protocol

**Gabapentin:** an antiseizure medication that is also used to treat pain, gabapentin causes dose-dependent sedation. It is often our first medication of choice in Chill Protocols because of its wide safety margin.

**Trazodone:** an SSRI that causes relaxation with less visible sedation than gabapentin in most cases. Trazodone is useful for short and long term anxiety and also has a wide safety margin. Some medications can potentially cause side effects if used with trazodone.

**Acepromazine:** a tranquilizer that can be combined with other medications to increase their effectiveness in dogs with higher levels of fear, anxiety and stress.

**Dexdomitor:** more commonly used as an injectable sedative, Dexdomitor can be given orally with other medications to increase the amount of sedation for dogs with high levels of fear, anxiety and stress.

**Phenobarbital:** an antiseizure medication that can be added to other protocols to increase the amount of sedation for dogs with high levels of fear, anxiety and stress.

**Melatonin:** a hormone that helps regulate sleep/wake cycles, melatonin is added to some protocols to reduce anxiety prior to surgery.

**Cerenia:** an antiemetic (stops vomiting) medication that can help reduce car-sickness as well as reduce stomach upset related to anesthetics. Cerenia is also used to reduce the amount of gas anesthetic required and to help reduce pain.