

Tips for a quiet *car ride*

Noise is a major anxiety trigger for pets during car travel. Here's how you can help reduce your pet's stress.



What pets hear on their car ride influences their anxiety level before they ever enter the veterinary practice. You may not be able to avoid some car noises, such as highway noise—rumble strips are especially bad—and other environmental sounds, including sirens, construction equipment and dogs barking. Even so, if you can keep your pet calm on the drive to the hospital, your pet may be an easier patient than if she's already feeling amped up.

1. Use a matter-of-fact approach

It may feel natural to try to reassure your pet. For example:

"It's going to be OK... Momma (or Daddy) loves you."

"We're going to go see your veterinarian. It's not so bad. Don't be scared!"

While your pet may not understand your words, your pet may have learned to associate your tone and type of talk, along with body language, with the idea that something bad is about to happen.

To soothe your pet, use a matter-of-fact tone and relay instructions with confidence. For example:

"Bella, chew on your food puzzle."

"Champ, get in your crate."

Then offer a reward for the good behavior.

2. Distract with calming noise

You may also try playing calming music in the car to ease tension for you and your pet. Consider music designed for pets or classical music that offers calming qualities and drowns out excess road noise that may be nerve-racking for your pet.