

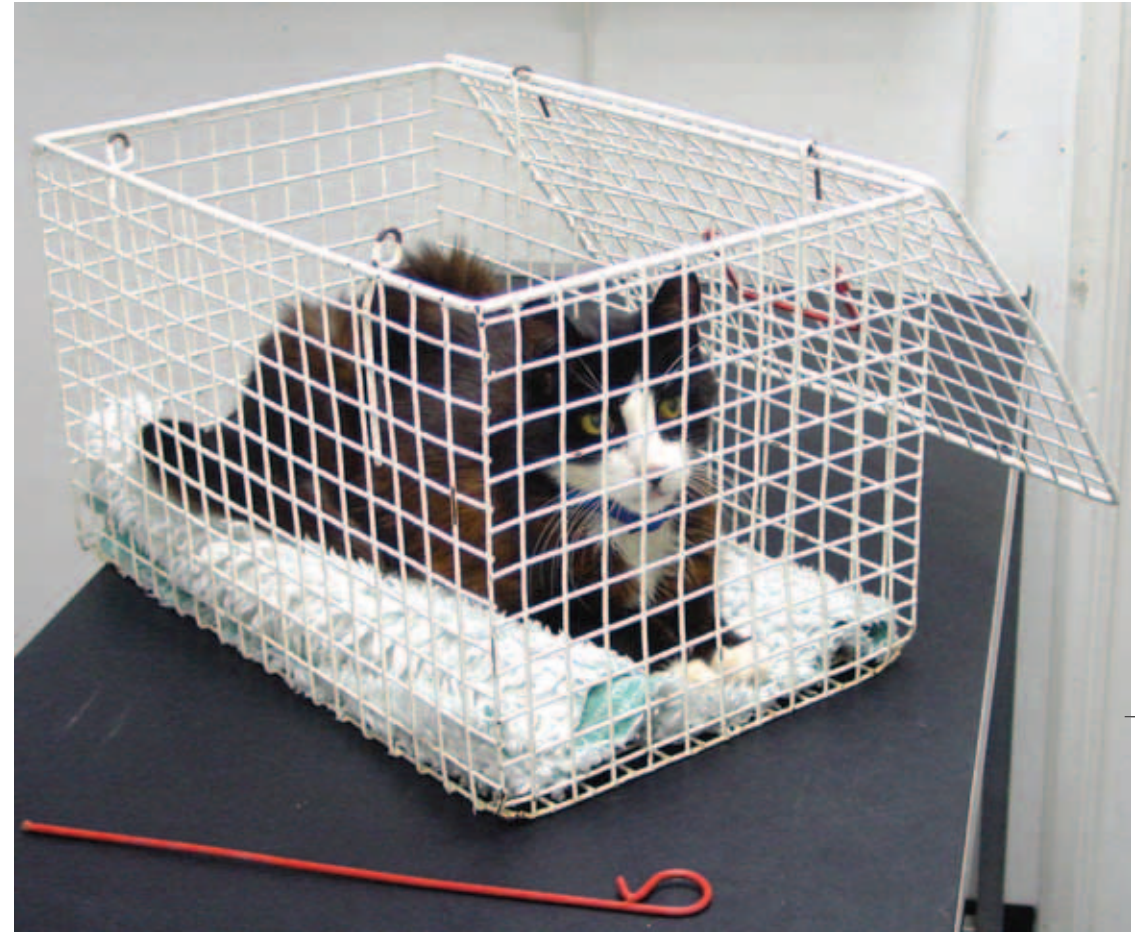
## Bringing your cat to the vet

*Bringing your cat to the veterinary surgery can be a trying and stressful experience. A number of simple measures can make the whole process more tolerable for cats and owners alike!*

### The cat carrier

Always choose a robust carrier (cardboard, especially if it gets damp, is no match for a determined cat!) and never travel with the cat loose in the car. There are numerous cat carriers on the market and it can be difficult to know which is best. Here are some tips on baskets and travel:

- The basket needs to be easy to clean and not so large that the cat falls about in it. For getting cats in and out, a top opening basket is by far the easiest.
- Ideally the box or basket should be regarded at home as 'part of the furniture' so that it doesn't become a signal for a stressful journey. Guidelines for achieving this are contained on our website at [www.fabcats.org](http://www.fabcats.org)
- Get the carrier to smell familiar and reassuring:
  - Put in some clothing that smells of the cat's favourite person.
  - Spray the basket and contents with Feliway (a synthetic feline pheromone which helps cats to feel secure; available from your vet) at least half an hour before you go.
  - Wipe a soft cloth around the cat's face to pick up his scent and put this in the basket. You can also rub it around the inside of the carrier, especially in the corners.
- If your cat panics at the sight of the carrier try to get him in safely and gently at the first try. Have the carrier close by but out of sight. Wrap the cat in a thick towel (preferably one which smells familiar) and pop him (and the towel) in quickly so that he cannot grab the carrier and get into a struggle, escape and then not be caught again that day!
- Keep the container covered with a cloth during the journey as this will help keep him calm.



*A top opening basket is by far the easiest to get cats in and out of.*

- Secure the carrier in the footwell behind the front seat or strap in using the seat belt.
- Drive carefully so that the cat is not thrown around in the car. Refrain from loud alarming music!
- Talk quietly and reassuringly and stay calm yourself – cats are great at picking up tension from their owners!
- Some cats are sick and others may soil the carrier during the journey, so taking some spare bedding may be useful for the return journey.
- Try to avoid rushing and bumping the carrier against your legs as you carry it into the surgery.

### In the waiting room

Keep the carrier covered in the waiting room. Choose the quietest possible location. The practice may have raised places to rest the carrier (cats prefer to be high up) rather than placing it on the ground. Practices may also have notices asking dog owners to desist from letting them sniff cat baskets, another potential cause of anxiety! Putting the cat face to face with another cat in a basket can be stressful too.

### Inside the consulting room

The vet is ultimately responsible for everyone's safety and welfare and may ask a nurse to assist with handling the cat, especially if you are nervous or unsure about how your cat will react. If you are unsure how to administer tablets or apply skin

ointments and eardrops, ask for a demonstration or advice (see FAB leaflet 'Giving medicines to your cat'). And if it isn't mentioned, ask for advice about administering water or feeding straight after giving a tablet to prevent your cat developing oesophageal problems.

### Operation

If your cat is having an investigative procedure or operation see leaflet 'Your cat is having an operation' in this series.

### Going home

As much care needs to be taken of any cat on the way home as on the outward journey, and all the same factors apply to travelling.

With multi-cat households some consideration also needs to be given to bringing the cat home, especially if it has been at the surgery for some time. The strange smells of the surgery can make cats anxious and there can be aggression between them. Careful re-introductions can prevent re-bonding problems. Details are contained in the FAB leaflet 'Taking your cat home – tips for maintaining good feline relations' available on the website.

[www.fabcats.org](http://www.fabcats.org)

## FAB's full range of Cat Friendly Practice leaflets

- Bringing your cat to the vet*
- Giving medicine to your cat*
- Feeding a poorly cat*
- Your cat is having an operation*
- Preventing health problems*
- Insuring your cat*
- Choosing a boarding cattery*
- Common household poisons and cats*
- Why do cats..?*

For more information on cat care  
[www.fabcats.org](http://www.fabcats.org)

### The Feline Advisory Bureau (FAB)

Set up almost 50 years ago, FAB's work now provides essential information for cat owners and expert information for people working with cats such as veterinary surgeons, breeders, cattery owners and rescue centres. Through our feline expert panel (a group of veterinary surgeons funded by FAB to specialise in feline care at UK veterinary universities) FAB has gathered a wealth of information on both common and rare conditions.

We're not just interested in veterinary treatment; our experts understand that a cat's home environment and lifestyle can have a huge influence on its health and well being. FAB is interested in the whole cat! The more owners understand cats and their behaviour the better they will be at spotting problems and giving TLC when a cat needs it most.

For over 400 pages of information on cat care go to FAB's website. We're already helping over 1 million cat owners a year.

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from the Feline Advisory Bureau

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