Preparing for the Trip: Tips for Feline Caregivers in Advance of the Veterinary Appointment

Do you have a cat carrier? If not, here are some tips for choosing one.
- Refer to What to Look for in a Cat Carrier resource (go.navc.com/48QOm1J).
- The carrier you choose should be made of solid, easy-to-clean material with 2 exits/entrances and a removable lid.

Where do you store your cat carrier?
- If you have your carrier stored away, make sure it is clean and free of debris. Bring it into the cat’s living space to allow your cat to become familiar and comfortable with it.
- Refer to Visiting Your Veterinarian: Getting Your Cat to the Veterinary Practice resource (go.navc.com/42g4mbb).

Is your cat familiar/comfortable with the cat carrier? If not, here are some tips for acclimating the cat to the carrier.
- Do your best to keep the carrier in the cat’s living space. Ideally your cat will become comfortable with using the carrier as a bed. If there is limited space in your home, use your cat’s carrier with the lid off in place of a cat bed.
- For upcoming appointments, continue to work with your cat by offering positive experiences (e.g., treats, attention, play) while the cat is in or near the carrier.

Have you had challenges getting your cat into the carrier in the past?
- Refer to Visiting Your Veterinarian: Getting Your Cat to the Veterinary Practice resource (go.navc.com/42g4mbb).
- Your veterinary team can help you with some of these challenges and give some suggestions to help your cat accept the carrier.

What are your plans for getting your cat into the carrier?
- Refer to Visiting Your Veterinarian: Getting Your Cat to the Veterinary Practice resource (go.navc.com/42g4mbb).
- Avoid physically struggling with your cat.
- Have the carrier in your home continually or at least as soon as the appointment is booked.
- Make the carrier a positive experience for your cat by offering them treats or attention when they are in or near it.
- Refer to cooperative care videos on carrier training (go.navc.com/3HrTe1a).

How has your cat responded to traveling in the carrier in the past (e.g., self-injury, vocal distress, nausea/vomiting, urination, defecation)?
- Your veterinarian may be able to prescribe anti-anxiety medications that you can give your cat before leaving for the appointment.
- These medications can help reduce your cat’s stress associated with the cat carrier and travelling.
- If you are worried about the effects of medications, ask your veterinary team to explain what they are, their safety, and how they will benefit your cat.
- Ask about when to give your cat medications and what effects they might have on your cat.
- If your cat vomits or drools during travel, your veterinarian may be able to prescribe anti-nausea medications. Try to schedule your cat’s appointment more than 2 to 3 hours after their meal, but avoid skipping a meal as this can be stressful for your cat. If you are asked to fast your cat for anesthesia, ask your veterinarian if you can give a small meal 3 to 4 hours before the anesthesia time. TVP