

5 Tips for Managing Feline Stress

Cats are a complex species with a unique set of needs, including environmental, food, and enrichment. If those needs are not met, feline patients can experience varying degrees of anxiety or stress. Feline stress is prevalent, and signs can vary, ranging from increased hiding to urine marking. However, owners do not always recognize these signs as being related to stress. Christopher Pachel, DVM, DACVB, CABC, offers veterinarians 5 tips for managing feline patient stress. To learn more, listen to the VetFolio Podcast discussion between Dr. Pachel and Cassi Fleming, MS, DVM, sponsored by Hill's, by scanning the QR code below.

1. Ask clients about their cat's behavior

Cat owners may not know their cat's stress signals. Asking "Is your cat acting stressed?" assumes they have that knowledge. Instead, veterinarians should ask more specific questions, such as, "Does your cat seem less comfortable when you interact?" or "Is your cat hiding more?"

2. Communicate effectively with owners

Determining your client's favored communication style and establishing trust means they will more likely follow your recommendations. Some people prefer an open dialogue and collaboration, but others favor detailed directions. Ask your client their preferred method, so you know how best to advise them.

3. Discuss nutritional products that can help manage feline stress

Administering anti-anxiety medications to cats can be challenging, so look for nutritional options. Hill's Prescription Diet Feline c/d Multicare Stress and Prescription Diet Feline GI Biome Stress, which contain ingredients such as L-tryptophan, milk protein hydrolysate and omega-3 fatty acids, can help manage feline stress.

4. Consider the cat's other health needs

Many stressed cats have other health problems, such as gastrointestinal sensitivity, obesity, or other metabolic conditions, which veterinarians must consider when devising a stress management plan. Fortunately, therapeutic diets with stress-fighting ingredients are available, so veterinarians can customize recommendations for their feline patients.

5. Recommend food puzzles

Cats are predatory animals and hunting for their food provides mental stimulation. Placing food in front of a cat twice a day leaves that box unchecked. Recommend that your clients use food puzzles or hide their cat's food around the house so mealtime provides more enrichment and stimulation than simply meeting their nutritional needs.



For more information, scan the QR code and keep an eye out for the upcoming Vet2Vet discussion between Dr. Pachel and Cassi Fleming, MS, DVM, sponsored by Hill's Pet Nutrition.

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