

## Transporting Your Cat

Once your cat is comfortable with your carrier, start to familiarize him with your car. Do your best to make these introductions positive experiences: incorporate a favorite treat or toy and something from home with familiar scents (bedding, towels etc.).

- Start by placing your cat in her carrier and simply spending several (2-3) minutes in the stationary vehicle. You can pretreat the carrier and car with Feliway wipes or spray to reduce anxiety. Engage your cat by speaking in a calm voice, petting and offering favorite treats. Gradually increase the duration of these visits; you can also turn the car on without moving to accustom your friend to the sound and feeling of a running automobile.
- Once you've established some familiarity and comfort with the car you can begin very short test rides- 1-2 blocks at most, initially. Bring your cat directly back inside and provide plenty of positive reinforcement! As her anxiety during car rides decreases, gradually increase the distance of drives. Not only are you demonstrating that car travel can be comfortable (or at least not frightening), you are also teaching your companion that the car does not always end up at the veterinarian!
- Always provide plenty of verbal rewards when driving with your cat.



### Reduce anxiety, stress and fear:

- Make certain to use a carrier of sufficient size that your friend can stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably.
- Bring favorite treats and toys along.
- Provide each cat his own carrier.
- Avoid feeding meals prior to travel- cats may do better on an empty or near-empty stomach.
- Reduce background noise by turning conventional music down or off, avoiding honking the horn, and closing doors gently (versus slamming). Play calming music (classical or music for cat ears) easily streamed on YouTube or iTunes.
- Avoid sudden starts and stops, and abrupt turning or swerving.
- Covering one or two sides of the carrier will block visual stimulation and may help prevent motion sickness.

- Discuss the use of sedatives or tranquilizers with your veterinarian, particularly for longer trips.

### **Minimize Discomfort/Maximize Safety!**

- First, check that your carrier has no loose knobs, sharp protrusions, cracks or other objects that could injure your cat or allow it to escape. Ensure that doors and removable tops are tightly closed, functional and secure.
- Never put a cat in a hot car! Bring the temperature to a comfortable level before bringing your friend into the vehicle.
- Do not allow vents to blow either hot or cold air directly into the carrier.



- Never leave a cat alone in a parked car!
- Make certain the carrier is clean before use and place absorbent pads or toweling in the bottom. Have extra bedding available in case your friend soils the carrier.
- Keep the carrier on a level surface at all times and secure it to the car with a seatbelt or other mechanism.
- Avoid swinging the carrier with the cat inside.