



Category 1: Physical and Emotional

MANDATORY

1.12 Syringes and needles are single-use only. Needles are replaced after drawing up vaccines, medications, unsuccessful sample collections, etc. so that the patient always receives a fresh needle.

- Insulin needles are exempt in that they cannot be replaced once insulin or other medication has been drawn up. Insulin syringes are to be disposed of after one use.
- Syringes used to deliver anything by mouth (e.g. food, water, medication) may be used more than once for the same patient, provided they are able to deliver the contents smoothly, efficiently, and safely.

One of the most common reasons a dog or cat sees the veterinarian is for an annual exam with vaccinations. Please consider the following options for making that visit a more comfortable experience.

- To minimize movement and noise, aim to have all items needed for the visit (e.g. vaccines, syringes, needles, covering towel, treats) prepared and ready to go at the start of the exam. The goal is to avoid having to exit and re-enter the room repeatedly.
- For vaccinations, the vaccine will be drawn up (or reconstituted) using a larger gauge needle, and then a new needle will be attached to the syringe(s) ensuring the sharpest needle with the least drag.
- The room in which the procedures are done will feature adequate pheromone exposure for the species under care. The hospital staff will be wearing pheromones on their clothing, refreshed as needed. The non-skid surfaces are spritzed with pheromones. The towels covering the syringes are spritzed with pheromones.
- “Putting the treat into treatment”
Before the procedure is attempted (i.e. the vaccination), the pet should be distracted by extremely high-value treats, such as dehydrated or warm deli meats, spreadable cheese, peanut butter, baby food, whipped cream, etc. We recommend using ice cream cones (just the plain yellow cones that taste like Styrofoam) to deliver the treats as it keeps your hands away from the mouth. Some veterinarians write the pet’s name or make a yellow smiley face out of a high-value treat and have the pet owner video their pet eating their own name while vaccinated. This makes for great social media posts!



Category 1: Physical and Emotional

- Once the pet is distracted, the person doing the procedure implements Touch Gradient—maintaining constant physical contact with the pet so as not to startle him/her. When using Touch Gradient, instead of grabbing a fold of skin or hiking up the back leg and jabbing the needle in, touch and lightly stroke the patient, then do the same motion with your other hand, and then tent the skin where you intend to insert the needle. The last time you tent the skin, you deliver the vaccine.
- Other Gentle Control techniques, such as towel wrapping, head covering, and/or use of compression garments, may be used to further decrease offending stimuli.
- Sedate early and often. If you can't reduce FAS to an acceptable level by other means, sedatives should be thought of as a first option, not a last resort.
- Use the Emotional Medical Record (EMR) to capture what techniques worked the best, where the pet liked the procedure to be done (e.g. table, floor, lap), what Gentle Control technique did or didn't work, what were known FAS triggers (e.g. a certain individual), and what treats were preferred. The goal is to always move the pet away from FAS and toward happy and calm.