



****Fear Free Injection Visits: What You Need to Know****

Keeping your pet protected with up-to-date injections is an important part of their health care. At our Fear Free Certified practice, we take a gentler and long-term approach—making vet visits more and more positive over time for you and your pet. To achieve this, we invite you to work with us as a team member or partner. Here's what you need to know to work with us!

****❤️ Love, Treats & Gentle Handling****

We use hands-on affection, play, and *lots* of tasty treats to help pets associate vet visits with good things. You'll find our fridge is stocked not only with injections, but also sausages, chicken, peanut butter, cheese, and more—because food helps turn pokes into pleasant experiences.

****🏠 Getting Ready at Home****

Before your visit:

- Stay calm—your pet senses your emotions!
- For cats, spray their carrier or bedding with a calming pheromone (like Feliway).
- For dogs, bring their favourite treats to help distract and reward.
- If pre-visit calming medications (PVPs) were prescribed, give them 1 hour before your appointment.

****Don't forget to drive smoothly and slowly to avoid abrupt stops that could tip the pet carrier or make things rough on your pet.****

****🚗 Arrival at the Clinic****

- If your pet is nervous, call us from your car. We can check you in over the phone and bring you straight into a calm, quiet room.
- Our consult rooms are prepared with:
 - Non-slip mats
 - Soft music



- Calming pheromones
- Minimal handling techniques

** 📅 During the Visit **

We assess each pet's emotional state (called their FAS score) before proceeding. If your pet is calm and cooperative, we can usually give the injection that day using:

1. **Topical numbing cream** beforehand
2. **Hidden needles** and comforting handling
3. **Slow, gentle injections** with super-thin needles
4. **Distraction with high-value treats** throughout

** ❌ What If We Couldn't Give the Injection Today? **

Sometimes, a pet shows signs of fear, anxiety, or stress (FAS) that are too high to safely proceed. If that happens, we will:

- **Pause** the visit to protect your pet's emotional wellbeing.
- **Discuss options** with you:
 - Reschedule the injection for another day
 - Use calming medication next time
 - Create a personalized desensitisation plan
- **Celebrate small wins**—even if the injection wasn't given, your pet gained a positive experience that builds trust for next time.

** What You Can Do at Home: **

If your pet was showing signs of fear in relation to the injection today, you can help us desensitise them and reduce their fear by following these steps:

1. **Take home a capped needle** (in its safety cap) from the hospital.
2. **Have high-value treats** ready each day for the next week.
3. **Day 1**: Sit with your pet and reward them with a treat while the capped needle is hidden in your hand.
4. **Day 2**: Let your pet see the capped needle in your hand and repeat the sit-for-treat exercise. Reward generously.
5. **Day 3**: Hold the needle visibly in your hand and bring it a bit closer to your pet's shoulders. If they stay relaxed, reward them. If they move away, repeat from a slightly greater distance.



6. ****Day 4 onward****: Gradually bring the needle closer to your pet's back/shoulder area while giving treats. Aim to eventually touch them on the shoulder with the needle in one hand and a treat in the other.

****Timing is crucial.**** We want your pet to associate physical touch with something positive, and that the "needle" just happens to be present.

**** 🚫 Why Fear Free Injections Matter****

Fear and stress can have lasting effects on your pet's health. By focusing on emotional wellbeing, we help not only prevent needle phobia and fear-based behavior, making future visits easier for everyone, but also protect their physical health by reducing stress.

**** 📅 Plan Ahead****

When you book your pet's appointment, feel free to ask:

- Which injections are due?
- Are there any lifestyle-based ones to consider? (e.g., leptospirosis for dogs who play in water)
- Can we split injections into multiple visits for a gentler experience?

**** 🌟 The Goal: A Happy, Healthy Pet- A Breeze for You!****

Our aim is to protect your pet's physical health without sacrificing their emotional wellbeing. With a little preparation and teamwork, we can turn injection visits into something your pet actually enjoys. This means more Enjoyable Visits for You.

If you have any questions or if today's visit didn't go to plan, we're here to support you and your pet every step of the way. Just call us on 02 4365 1086.