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SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

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We Are Gold



A Cat Friendly Gold Practice is a veterinary clinic that has achieved the highest level of recognition in the Cat Friendly Practice® (CFP) Program, established by the Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA) and International Cat Care. This designation signifies a clinic's commitment to providing exceptional care tailored to the unique needs of cats, ensuring a low-stress environment for feline patients and their caregivers.

What Makes a Clinic “Cat Friendly Gold”?

To attain Gold status, a veterinary practice must meet and exceed the criteria outlined in the CFP Program's comprehensive 130-point checklist. This involves:

- Staff Training & Continuing Education: Ensuring all team members are well-versed in feline behavior and handling techniques.
- Client Communications: Effectively educating cat owners on the importance of feline-specific care.
- Practice Premises: Designing spaces that minimize stress, such as separate waiting areas for cats.
- Feline Handling & Interactions: Implementing gentle and empathetic approaches during examinations.
- Hospitalization & Boarding: Providing environments that cater to the comfort of hospitalized cats.
- Pain Management & Anesthesia: Adopting best practices to manage pain and ensure safe procedures.
- Diagnostic Imaging & Laboratory Facilities: Utilizing equipment and techniques suitable for feline patients.
- Treatment & Health Safety: Delivering care that prioritizes feline health and safety.
- Preventive Healthcare: Offering individualized care plans based on the cat's life stage.

Achieving Gold status indicates that a clinic has not only met these standards but has also implemented innovative solutions to enhance feline care. This includes creating a calming atmosphere, using feline-friendly handling techniques, and ensuring that the clinic environment is tailored to the needs of cats.

Benefits of Choosing a Cat Friendly Gold Practice

For cat owners, selecting a Gold-standard clinic offers several advantages:

- Reduced Stress: A clinic environment designed to minimize anxiety for cats during visits.
- Expert Care: Access to veterinary professionals trained in feline-specific medicine and behavior.
- Enhanced Communication: Clear guidance on preventive care and treatment options tailored for cats.
- Comprehensive Services: Availability of specialized services that cater to the unique needs of feline patients.





International Pet Travel: Planning for the Adventure of a Lifetime



By Dr. Carolyn Askew

Who doesn't love the excitement of travel—exploring new places, meeting new people, and making unforgettable memories? Now imagine sharing those adventures with your best four-legged friend! Traveling internationally with your pet can be incredibly rewarding, but it does take some thoughtful planning to ensure a smooth experience.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of helping clients prepare their pets for travel to amazing destinations like Iceland, Hawaii, Spain, France, Turkey, Australia, England, and Italy—just to name a few. Some of them even made the journey back (that's a whole different adventure)!

Each country has its own unique set of rules and documentation requirements to ensure that visiting pets are healthy and meet local regulations. These may include specific vaccinations given within certain timeframes, Rabies titer testing, approved deworming protocols, and more. It's important to note that requirements can change without notice, and even the United States has re-entry requirements for pets returning from abroad.

Where to Begin?

The first—and most important—step is to connect with a USDA-accredited veterinarian. These veterinarians are specially certified by the federal government and stay up to date through continuing education every three years. They are your best resource for current international travel regulations and can guide you through the entire process.

Some destinations (like Iceland and Australia) have particularly strict requirements and lengthy timelines for testing and certification. The earlier you start planning, the better. All international health certificates must be issued by a USDA-accredited veterinarian and then endorsed by a USDA official, so timing is everything.

At the Animal Clinic of Chardon, I truly enjoy working on International Health Certificates. It gives me the opportunity to connect with people embarking on exciting journeys—and I get to live a little vicariously through their stories!

If you're considering international travel with your pet, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help make the process as smooth and stress-free as possible for both you and your furry companion.





Holiday Hazards for Pets



As we approach the holiday season, please be aware of the following dangers to your pet(s).

Foods to Avoid

- Chocolate – toxic to dogs and cats.
- Xylitol (found in sugar-free gum, candies, baked goods) – can cause liver failure in dogs.
- Grapes & Raisins – can cause kidney failure.
- Onions, Garlic, Chives – toxic to both dogs and cats.
- Rich, fatty foods – can cause pancreatitis.
- Bones – splinter and cause obstructions.
- Alcohol – even small amounts are dangerous.



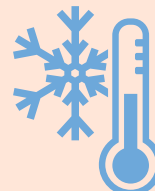
Decorations & Plants

- Tinsel & Ribbon – especially dangerous for cats; can cause intestinal blockages.
- Ornaments – glass or plastic pieces can cause injury if chewed or swallowed.
- Christmas tree water – may contain fertilizers, bacteria, or preservatives.
- Electrical cords – chewing hazard that can cause burns or electrocution.
- Candles – risk of burns or fire if knocked over.
- Potpourri – liquid and dried forms can be toxic.
- Plants:
 - Poinsettia – mild irritation.
 - Holly & Mistletoe – more toxic; can cause vomiting, diarrhea, or heart issues.
 - Lilies – deadly to cats, even in small amounts.



Cold Weather Concerns

- Antifreeze (ethylene glycol) – highly toxic, even a small lick can be fatal.
- Ice melt/salt – can irritate paws and cause illness if ingested.
- Cold exposure – frostbite and hypothermia risks for outdoor pets.



Holiday Gatherings

- Open doors – pets can slip out unnoticed.
- Stress & overstimulation – new people, noises, and changes in routine can cause anxiety.
- Guest bags – may contain medications, chocolate, or gum.

