

All 4 Paws Animal Hospital COVID Protocols

Due to decreasing COVID and increasing vaccinations locally, we are ready to start allowing more in-person visits starting Monday June 21st, 2021. We will continue to do all initial check-ins curbside over the phone, curbside service for medication pick-up, and curbside outpatient visits at this time, but will offer in-person visits to anyone who has a wellness, sick, or recheck appointment with the doctor. In-person visits are not required, however; anyone who prefers to have a curbside appointment is welcome to do so. All of our current team members are COVID 19 vaccinated but we will still continue to wear masks around all clients, we will continue to escort clients in and out of the building to prevent congestion at the front, and we will disinfect our exam rooms between each in-person visit to keep everyone as safe as possible. **Please note our protocols are subject to change based on the COVID numbers in our state and county, and the prevalence of variants that are resistant to available vaccines.**

Requirements are as Follows for In-Person Visits:

- 1) **Anyone entering the building must be feeling healthy and have not been exposed to anyone with a confirmed case of COVID in the past 2 weeks.**
- 2) **No more than 2 people are allowed inside for the visit.**
- 3) **Masks are to be worn at all times inside the building for any client/person over 2 years old.**

Steps for In-Person Visits are as Follows:

- 1) Since the most likely risk of transmission occurs when spending 10 minutes or more with an infected person, we will continue to limit in-person interaction time by checking you in curbside - call us at 919-267-9315 when you arrive in our parking lot for your pet's appointment, we will collect a history over the phone and then an assistant will come out and escort you and your pet into the building when we can ensure you won't encounter anyone else in reception or the hallway.
- 1) The doctor will do the exam on your pet inside the exam room and go over any findings.
- 2) The doctor will leave and make a treatment plan based on exam findings and services due, which the vet assistant will present to you.
- 3) All diagnostics and treatments will then be performed in the back treatment area, while you remain in the room, and then your pet will be returned to you.
- 4) Once the visit is complete, a veterinary assistant will escort you to the reception area when it is clear of any other clients, and then you will be escorted out of the building once you have checked out.

Steps for 100% Curbside Service are as Follows:

- 2) Call us at 919-267-9315 when you arrive in our parking lot for your pet's appointment.
- 3) An assistant will get the history over-the-phone then will come get your pet. **Please ensure all cats are confined in a carrier and all dogs are wearing a collar and leash to ensure no pets are able to escape when we open the car door to collect them.**
- 4) The vet will do an exam and then call you discuss findings and go over any treatment plans.
- 5) You can pay by credit card over the phone or we can come to your car to collect payment.
- 6) We will bring your pet back out to your car at the end of the visit.

Please call ahead for medication refills – we will call you when they are ready to go. **Please give us at least 72 hours' notice of when you need medication refills** as many shipments have been arriving later than normal.

Finally, please remember **the North Carolina Veterinary Board considers telemedicine for new patients or new issues illegal** and they are the superseding governing body of veterinarians in North Carolina so even though the FDA and other organizations have deemed telemedicine ok during this pandemic, we have very strict limitations still in place. For a veterinarian to practice medicine (this includes telemedicine) in the State of North Carolina they need to first establish a veterinary-client-patient-relationship (VCPR). A VCPR is established only when a veterinarian examines an animal in person, and is maintained by regular veterinary visits as needed to monitor an animal's health. If a VCPR is established but a veterinarian does not regularly see the animal afterward, the VCPR is no longer valid and it is considered illegal and unethical for a veterinarian to dispense or prescribe medications or recommend treatment without recently examining the patient. A young healthy animal may only need to be seen once a year to establish a VCPR, barring development of any illness. However, an older animal will require more frequent examinations to ensure their health status. An animal with *new* or existing health problems such as epilepsy, heart disease, renal disease, etc. will require more frequent examinations to maintain a valid VCPR. A valid VCPR cannot be established online (virtually), via email, or over the phone. However, once a VCPR is established, it may be able to be maintained between medically necessary examinations via telephone or other methods; but it's up to the veterinarian's discretion to determine if this is appropriate and in the best interests of an animals' health.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this time. Together we can continue to slow the spread of COVID-19. **If you have any questions, please call (919-267-9315) or email us (clientservices@apexvethospital.com).**

Sincerely,

The Doctors and Staff of All 4 Paws Animal Hospital