

EXAM / HANDLING INTOLERANCE



During their time at the MD SPCA, this dog did show discomfort and intolerance to invasive handling. Outside of an exam setting, during more organic interactions, they shown safe, social behavior around people. Because this dog has this history, they will need additional training in a home environment. Here are some tips for helping them continue to be comfortable with vet exams and invasive handling in general:

- Use 1/2 of your dog's daily food to train by touching their ears, paws, tail, and teeth then giving them a piece of food right afterwards. Sequence: touch paw > food etc.
- Go slow and pay attention to your dog's body language. If at any point they become stiff, tuck their tail, or move away then back up a step.
- If their regular food is not enticing enough, try practicing with small pieces of cheese or bacon. Basically, use whatever gets them really excited and happy.
- Keep sessions under 5 minutes but be sure to focus on getting the food to them as quickly as possible after handling so they make the association between handling and food happening.
- Visit the vet when they do NOT have an appointment. Be sure to call ahead and ask if you can just drop by to play training games in the clinic or get loads of treats from staff.
- Pay close attention to the vet staff's handling and be sure they aren't pushing your furry friend over their comfort level.
- When you notice rough or rushed handling, ask them to slow down and if they won't – it may be time to find another vet.
- ALWAYS be your dog's advocate! Remember, many vet clinics are embracing the no fear, no force, and low stress handling movement so you can seek out clinics that are making an effort to minimize your dog's stress.

It is also a great idea to work on muzzle training at home with your dog so that they have a positive association with it if/when it is necessary for invasive procedures at the vet. Here is a great resource to get started: muzzleupproject.com