

New client policy in light of current Covid-19 “social distancing” requirements (6-23 update):

As you all know, the situation regarding safe exposure is challenging so we had to put in a policy that allows us to continue helping new patients that will likely last until we have a vaccine (early 2021 hopefully?). The facility where we practice (Eye Care for Animals) no longer allows the public to enter and, with humans infected and spreading virus without showing clinical signs, we simply cannot use our “regular” practice model of meeting in person with pet owners and pet(s) for an extended appointment (3-4 hours for new cases) breathing the same air and talking in the same small exam room or by housecall. **For now, we will be only meeting new patients “in person” in the cul de sac or driveway in front of the doctor’s home office in Carmel Valley** ideally *after* the rest of the appointment is first done via telemedicine. Legally, all licensed veterinary doctors including specialists must establish a Veterinarian/Client/Patient (VCPR) legal relationship during an “examination” of the patient and meeting the pet owner in order to provide any veterinary services including establishing a diagnosis, treatment plan, prescribing medications, etc. Due to exposure concerns, we will establish this VCPR by “seeing” the patient/pet parents in person with brief “curbside check-in” in Carmel Valley but keep extended “social distancing” (mask and distance). Before this brief (about 5 minutes) “in person” part of the visit occurs, we will convene at the initial appointment time using “video chat” option (ideal since audio & visual and can see pet in natural home surroundings but on phone possible as well if no other choice) such as [Zoom](#), [Google Meet](#) or [Skype](#) with pet parent at their home with the pet and at their computer (or cell phone if no computer) using telemedicine/video chat with the specialist doctor. We could also do the “curbside exam” first followed by the video-chat but better to plan for *after* the telemedicine consultation so that training aids and/or medications may be able to be dispensed by the doctor at that time. We are sorry for the challenging nature of meeting the legal needs of establishing the legal VCPR after the initial appointment via telemedicine (especially those that must drive long distances just to briefly meet in front of doctor’s house 😞) but this is the present and we would not offer this arrangement if our experience to date did not show that we can still be of very effective help using telemedicine followed by treatment notes and handouts sent later via e-mail. We also have an [online pharmacy partner](#) integrated into our practice so can provide any needed refill medications or other veterinary products that can be shipped to you as needed using that resource. Please check our website for future updates or inquire with our office (e-mail best but leaving voicemail slower but can also work) if you have questions about an appointment. As a speciality, we California-based Veterinary Behaviorists are seeking ongoing guidance from the California Vet. Medicine Board in Sacramento to see if we can temporarily suspend the legal requirement for the initial and annual “in person exam” requirement of the case during this pandemic emergency and use telemedicine (without having to actually “see” the patient/owner) instead similar to Arizona and some other states but must follow current state practice laws. **As with all Telemedicine appointments, payment will be taken during the appointment (see P.S. below).**

We are sorry for any disruption in our normal specialty practice services and our clients’ schedule with these steps but they are for all of our health and it is vital for us all to work together to make it through this difficult time. We hope you and yours stay safe during this time 😊

P.S. Please note that in order to be fair to all clients, those that choose to pay by credit or debit card (we accept Visa, Mastercard or Discover) will pay a **4% convenience fee** (also be sure to let doctor know this ASAP when we start to allow sufficient time to check out via credit card as it takes longer). To avoid this additional modest convenience fee, simply pay using [VENMO](#), [Google Pay](#) or [Zelle](#) 😊

"We confirm appointments as a courtesy; it is still your responsibility to stay aware of the time and date of your appointment or cancel/reschedule with sufficient (48 business hours) notice to avoid incurring late cancellation fees."