

# QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT VETERINARY CLINICS

**Is your clinic Fear Free certified? If not, is there a vet who is?**

I highly recommend fear free certified vets as they will know to not push your dog too much and make the whole experience nicer.

**If my dog is nervous for an exam, what can be done?**

You want to make sure vets will not make your dog suffer. This means potentially using meds next time, taking it slower, or suggesting training.

**If my dog has trouble and has to come back will we be charged twice?**

Some fear free clinics will stop the exam and tell you to come back another time with meds. When they do that, ideally they don't charge extra. Always good to know what to expect ahead of time.

**What are the cleaning procedures**

It is helpful if they clean exam rooms between clients to reduce smells of anxiety from other animals and of course for health reasons as well.

**Where do dogs wait for their appointment?**

Some vets will have separate areas for dogs and cats, some tell you to stay in the car. Whatever works best for you and your dog!

**Can I be with my dog for the whole exam?**

There might be safety/legal reasons you can't go to the back but most things can be done in the exam room with you. It never hurts to ask.

**Do you work with a veterinary behaviorist?**

If your dog needs behavioral intervention it is helpful if your vet already has an established relationship with a veterinary behaviorist.

**What do exam rooms look like?**

Many fear-free vets have forgone the exam table and now have exam rooms that are more comfortable. Couches are common, rugs, PLENTY of dog treats.

**Can I schedule a happy visit?**

For puppies and fearful dogs, happy visits can be extremely helpful. Ask if happy visits are encouraged and what happens during them.



# QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT DOG TRAINERS

**What methods do you use?**

Positive reinforcement only! Some have added things like fear-free and force-free which is even better.

**What is your background?**

It is nice to know what a trainer's background is whether it be education at a school or with internships.

**Is there any situation in which punishment would be appropriate?**

We would want a no here.

**What do lessons look like with you?**

Does the trainer offer an initial consult or do you buy a package of lessons up front? What does the actual lesson look like - where is it, how long, etc.

**If needed, can you talk to my vet?**

It is always good for your dog trainer to be comfortable relaying info to your vet incase they think anxiety meds might be appropriate or if they suspect your dog's behavior is related to pain.

**Why do you use these methods?**

We want trainers who are ethical and believe in humane treatment of all living things.

**What certifications do you have?**

Certifications are not all equal. Make sure to research the qualifications to know that they are reputable and positive reinforcement based.

**What are your specialties?**

If your dog has fear-aggression look for a trainer with that specialty. With our puppies, we want a trainer who understands how puppies learn.

**What kind of follow-up support do you offer between sessions?**

This might not be important to everyone but if you know you are someone who does better with more check-ins make sure to ask this!

**Do you guarantee results?**

This might surprise you but we want a NO here. Every dog is an autonomous being and there are so many variables that a guarantee is suspicious. We want a guarantee only that they are willing to try and help us as best they can.



# QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT GROOMERS

**Are you fear-free certified?**

Grooming can be scary! You want a groomer who understands this and does their best to prevent it.

**Where will my dog be when not being groomed?**

Some groomers have the dogs loose, others cage them. Both have pros and cons. Some dogs don't like being caged but it is technically safer.

**Can you break grooming into shorter, lower-stress sessions if needed?**

If your dog does better with short handling sessions this could be helpful information to get.

**Have you worked with my breed of dog before?**

It is important they know how to properly handle your dog's coat.

**If my dog is having a really hard time will you stop?**

Best to stop and discuss a plan for next time to get better results.

**How many dogs do you groom at a time?**

If you want to have your dog groomed without waiting, ask if they can start or end the day.

**How are incidents and injuries handled?**

Ask how they report it, how they determine if the dog needs to go to the vet.

**Do you ever restrain dogs?**

Ask what they use and why. If your dog needs to be muzzled, it might be better to talk about how to lower stress.

**What are your vaccination/health requirements?**

Make sure they require PROOF of vaccinations. Ask what they do if they find out a client has kennel cough.

**Do you keep detailed notes about each dog's preferences and triggers for future visits?**

Can you imagine if you had over 100 clients and you didn't keep detailed notes?? This is a good one to know if they are serious about keeping their clients safe and happy.



# QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT DAYCARES

## How are dogs grouped?

Good daycares will have dogs grouped by a combination of age, size, and activity level.

## What type of play are dogs allowed to engage in?

If dogs are allowed to police themselves, things can get hectic. Slowing down play when energy levels get too high is important.

## What will my dog be doing throughout the course of the day?

The best doggy daycares have a structured day. Enrichment, play, lunch, nap, etc

## How do you determine eligibility

Is there a temperament test for dogs? What do they look for in a participant.

## What are the cleaning procedures

Make sure they are regularly cleaning the facility. If the facility smells strongly - it is not clean. Ask what cleaners they use.

## What is the staff to dog ratio?

Anything more than 1:10 is too many dogs and too few staff.

## How are incidents and injuries handled?

Ask how they report it, how they determine if the dog needs to go to the vet, how they decide if a dog can come back to the group.

## Will my dog have outdoor access?

Dogs need outdoor access to relieve themselves. Do not let daycares convince you otherwise.

## What are your vaccination/health requirements?

Make sure they require PROOF of vaccinations. Ask what they do if they find out a client has kennel cough.

## What training do staff get?

You want to make sure the staff understands canine body language. Do they have regular staff meetings to learn? Do staff take continuing ed?

## How do they manage dogs' arousal levels?

Yelling and using a spray bottle are red flags. Look for regular breaks instead.

