



## Dr. Marty Becker Talks about His Game-Changing Fear Free Program, Which Benefits Veterinarians and Their Canine Clients

► **How many veterinary professionals are now Fear Free Certified? How many are you projecting will join this year (2022)?**

We have more than 80,000 veterinary professionals who are Fear Free Certified, and we are projecting an additional 15,000 this year.

► **How do you respond when or if a veterinarian feels they will lose income if they go slower with each patient and thus perhaps see fewer patients each day?**

Studies show that doing a Fear Free exam only takes seconds longer (26 seconds) and the actual time and quality of the exam itself is better because less time is spent wrestling with the pet being examined (who commonly thinks they're going to be harmed or even killed). In a Fear Free practice, there is no decrease in the number of pets being seen per doctor, customer satisfaction scores increase, injuries decrease, practice income increases, and the number of employees who leave decreases.

► **How do we get veterinarians onboard—what can trainers and owners do to help enroll vets?**

It's been said the only person who likes change is a four-month-old baby with a wet diaper. It's hard enough to change yourself, let alone someone else, and veterinarians are notoriously stubborn. But things ARE changing. Almost ⅔ of all veterinary schools in the United States now require Fear Free certification of students before graduation. Students are learning the nomenclature and protocols in animal handling and are seeing them practiced in the teaching hospitals and then putting them to practice before graduation in community practice rotations. Upon graduation, they want to work in veterinary practices that embrace Fear Free. Increasingly, pet parents are only taking their pets to animal



**Fear Free is the world's leading organization training cooperative care to veterinarians and staff around the world. This program helps to reduce and even remove anxiety or stress out of a veterinary care visit for both owners and dogs.**

professionals (veterinarians, trainers, groomers, pet sitters, and boarding facilities) who use Fear Free. If you're a trainer or groomer, find a Fear Free practice in your area to refer to.

► **What feedback are you getting from certified veterinarians in terms of how this program has helped them help animals?**

Fear Free is the most significant and successful transformation in small animal medicine since the invention of antibiotics and vaccinations. Simply put, Fear Free benefits every animal visiting a practice by reducing fear, anxiety, and stress and increasing happiness and calm. Pets can remain calm and pet parents can take their pet to the vet's office (or trainer, groomer, boarder, etc.) without feeling like they're hurting their pets by trying to help them. Surveys show veterinarians are seeing six major benefits from using Fear Free in practice:

1. **Oath**—The practice matches up with the oath they took at graduation “to prevent or relieve animal pain and suffering.”
2. **Better Medicine**—With Fear Free, vital signs are more normal, physical exams are more normal (pets aren't hiding pain and sensitivity), and blood work and other diagnostics are more accurate.
3. **Fewer Injuries**—Bites, scratches, back injuries, etc., drop precipitously once you ratchet down fear, anxiety, and stress and lower fear-based aggression.
4. **Easier to Attract and Retain Team Members**—Nobody wants to work in a place that makes life worse for animals or ignores their emotional well-being. Rather, veterinarians, vet techs, and other team members want to work in a place where you can love animals and they love you back.
5. **Better Economics**—Studies show that all key practice indicators (KPIs) and net income increase when a practice becomes Fear Free certified.
6. **Fun**—When dogs drag their moms and dads into the practice and almost all cats take treats, everyone wins. Pets are happy and calm, pet parents are happy and calm, team members are happy and calm—and practice is just like you dreamed it could be.



**Fear Free is all about making the dog's comfort a priority. It changes the vet's office from a potentially scary place to a place many dogs actually want to go visit.**

► **What are the top three benefits to animals who are seen by Fear Free vets?**

1. The pet going into a veterinary practice because they're sick, injured, or need routine or preventive care will not have the anxious feeling in the back of their mind that they are going to be harmed. By maintaining their calm, a negative experience won't get seared into the amygdala, they heal faster, they don't have immunosuppression that can decrease vaccine effectiveness, and there's a decrease in digestive upset.
2. Because the pet wants to go to the vet and pet parents don't mind taking them, the pet is much more likely to receive the medical care it deserves.
3. Because pet parents don't delay regular checkups and are more likely to take the pet to the vet at the first signs of illness, the veterinary healthcare team can catch illnesses and conditions in their earliest phases, which can prevent more serious problems, increase the chances of a successful treatment or cure, and save money.