

Refugee Animals

*Adapted and modified by Valerie Jonckheer for international use from the [website](#)
Translated into English by the FVE and Valerie Jonckheer.*

Introduction

1. Advice for veterinarians and veterinary personnel dealing with refugee animals

When you expect a refugee animal in the practice, prepare yourself and the team well. Do not take unnecessary risks if the animal's rabies status is unknown. Assume that the animal will be stressed or frightened. A stressed and/or frightened animal can bite. For comprehensive information for veterinary surgeons on how to prevent stress in animals in the veterinary practice, read the IVC Evidensia Nederland Behaviour and Welfare Veterinary Practice Guideline: Working in a more animal-friendly manner in the veterinary practice (currently only available in Dutch). This contains general advice and is not specific to animals that may be carriers of the rabies virus. For those animals, it is extremely important to avoid contact between humans and animals, and between those animals and other (present) animals, as much as possible. Do not leave them waiting in the waiting room. Make sure they can go straight to the outpatients' room and that the veterinarian is ready for them. Make sure the animal is handled as little as possible if its rabies status is unknown. The veterinarian should wear gloves. If more personnel is needed, e.g. a vet nurse to distract the animal with treats, make sure that he/she also wears gloves.

If you are a veterinarian and you suspect that a cat or dog has rabies, contact the relevant local authority immediately.

Try to reassure the animal. Give the animal time. Talk to the owner and/or carer first before considering putting the animal on the table. Only put the animal on the table if strictly necessary. Do not use verbal or physical punishment. That is, do not speak harshly to the animal and do not smack it. If a dog growls or a cat barks at you, do not blame the animal or its owner/caretaker. The animal does this to defend itself. It does not understand that you only want to help it.

Rewards

Give the animal many tasty treats.

Muzzle

If you suspect that a dog will bite you, place a muzzle on the dog. If you are dealing with a dog that needs a muzzle, this means that it is very stressed. Send the owner to another room with the dog and give the dog a short working anti-anxiety medication like diazepam in a very small amount (5ml max) liquid food. Wait a minimum of two hours before taking blood if you have used diazepam.

Oral sedation

There are no veterinary products registered on the Dutch market for oral medication of stressed animals in the veterinary setting except diazepam. Veterinary diazepam tablets are sold under the name of Multipam and diazepam tablets of Kela registered for a one time use for dogs and cats for the indications of fear, excitement, unmanageability and cramping. The dosage for dogs is one time 0,5 – 2,0 mg per kg bodyweight per os. The dosage for cats is one time 1,0 – 2,0 mg per kg bodyweight per os.

Intramuscular sedation

In the case that diazepam is not sufficient and does not help the animal sufficiently you can go over to intramuscular sedation. In that case you should follow the advice of IVC Evidensia Netherlands anaesthesiologie "Guideline on anaesthesia for healthy dogs and cats" (currently only available in Dutch).

Below is the advice (distributed and amended below with the permission of the Department Chairman Mr. Hugo van Oostrom) for healthy dogs and cats.

With restless or anxious dogs, it is preferable to administer premedication calmly intramuscularly rather than intravenously (via a cannula). With cats, intramuscular administration is always preferable. This can be done preferably in the dorsal regions.

For intramuscular premedication, the dosage (for a non-painful procedure such as an inoculation or blood sampling):

- Dexmedetomidine (e.g. sedadex) 5 microgram/kg (LG patient x 5 / 500 = number of ml),
Or
- Medetomidine (e.g. sedastart) 10 microgram/kg (patie't's LG x 10 / 1000 = number of ml).

In combination with:

Butorphanol (e.g. butomidor) 0.3 mg/kg (patie't's LG x 0.3 / 10 = number of ml).

For optimal effect, place the animal in a quiet environment for at least 10 minutes.

For very restless or anxious animals, administer intramuscularly (during a non-painful procedure such as vaccination or blood sampling):

- Dexmedetomidine (e.g. sedadex) 5 microgram/kg (LG patient x 5 / 500 = number of ml),
Or
- Medetomidine (e.g. sedastart) 10 microgram/kg (patie't's LG x 10 / 1000 = number of ml).

In combination with:

- Ketamine (e.g. anesketin) 1.5 mg/kg (LG patient x 1.5 / 100 = number of ml)
- Midazolam 0.2 mg/kg (LG patient x 0.2 / 5 = number of ml)
- Butorphanol (e.g. butomidor) 0.3 mg/kg (LG patient x 0.3 / 10 = ml)

Poorly approachable animals can usually be injected calmly using a thin infusion extension line.

Does the animal have behavioural problems? Then look at the advice from the IVC Evidensia Netherlands Behaviour and Welfare on behavioural therapy and training in animals (currently only available in Dutch).

Click [here](#) for an informative film on how to vaccinate dogs in a welfare-friendly manner (in Dutch but the actions are clear).

Click [here](#) for an informative film on how to perform a blooddraw from a dog in a welfare friendly manner (in English).

Click [here](#) for an informative film on how to perform a blooddraw from a cat in a welfare-friendly manner (in English).

2. Advice for owners, host families or care takers of refugee animals

If you receive a dog or cat from a disaster area, with or without an owner, try to leave the animal in peace. Do not try to pet the animal, lift it up, etc. If the animal seeks contact with you, e.g. a cat comes to give you a hug or a dog puts his chin on your lap, then you can consider stroking the animal.

Provide a safe place for the animal where it has access to food and water and possibly a litter box. Certainly do not touch the animal if its rabies status is unknown.

It may help to improve the animal's olfactory environment. For dogs, use a room where a CEVA Adapti3aporizerer has been plugged in for at least a day, and for cats use a CEVA Optimu3aporizerer.

Dogs can be kept separate by teaching them to lie behind a stair gate or in a crate. It is important to make this fun for the dog and teach him to go there on command. How do you do this? See our Information Sheet: Restricting dogs in an animal friendly way (currently only available in Dutch).

Keep cats indoors for at least 6 weeks before considering giving them access to the outdoors (if they were originally outdoor cats). Keep dogs on a lead and only let them loose in off-leash areas when you are sure that the dog does not have rabies and that you also know that the dog is social towards dogs and other animals, as well as people.

Never be angry with the animal and do not punish it.

If the animal has medical or behavioural problems, consult a vet.

Disclaimer:

The information given has been made available as quickly as possible, given the situation in the Ukraine. It may be modified again in the future.

Although it is written with great care, IVC Evidensia NL, FVE and the author Valerie Jonckheer take no responsibility for errors or inaccuracies. The recommendations are general and may not be appropriate in an individual case. Thus it may be necessary to consult a veterinarian in some cases for more specific advice for an individual animal.

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Instruction Sheet: Use of Pheromones and Supplements in Refugee Cats in the temporary shelter.

Below is the advice that volunteers can give to the owners of refugee cats regarding with regard to:

1. Pheromones

Feliway® has some products for cats that contain pheromones. Pheromones are chemical substances used in communication that the cat can perceive. These substances can help make cats feel more relaxed.

There are 2 products available that can be used (or given away if available):

- A Feliway® Classic spray.

This spray should be sprayed in the environment of the cat (on blankets, baskets etc).

It must NEVER be sprayed on the cat. Use the spray 15 minutes before on the materials and only let the cat come there after this 15-minute period.

- The Feliway® vaporiser.

This is a vaporiser that can be put in an electrical socket near (or in the same room as) the cat. In a large hallway this will dissipate quickly. But give this vaporiser to the owners of the cat, so they can use it in the host family. Leave the vaporiser plugged in all day. Ideally you should start 24 hours in advance, if this is not possible, start as soon as possible.

2. Supplements

To reduce the stressful experience for the cat, it is possible to use a calming dietary supplement, called Zylkène®. This product is based on a milk protein, which can help encourage relaxation.

You can give this product to the cat owners. Make sure that you give the right dosage!

The dosage of Zylkène® for cats is:

- a. The first 2 weeks 1x per day 30 mg/kg (that is 1x per day 1-2 capsules of 75 mg, depending on the weight of the cat). The average adult cat weighs approximately 5kg.
- b. after 2 weeks, give for another 6 weeks 1x per day 15 mg/kg (that is 1x per day 1-2 capsules of 75 mg, depending on the weight of the cat).

3. Cat shelters

Cats like to hide. Give the owners, as soon as they have shown up, the instructions to set up a nice box for the cat (with Feliway® spray and see also the information sheet: 'EDZNG 10-point list for dog and cat owners'). Make sure that a cat house is placed in the crate. Look carefully at how these houses should be put together, this is described on the back of the packaging. If feliway cardboard cathouses are not available, use a cardboard box.

See also the information sheet: 'EDZNG 10 point list for dog and cat owners'.

Instruction sheet: pheromones and supplements for refugee dogs

Below is the advice that volunteers can give to the owners of refugee dogs regarding with regard to:

1. Pheromones

Adaptil® has some products for dogs that contain pheromones. Pheromones are chemical substances involved in communication that dogs can perceive. These substances can make dogs feel more relaxed.

relaxed.

There are 2 products that can be used (or given away):

- An Adaptil® Classic spray.

This spray should be sprayed in the dog's environment (on blankets, baskets etc).

Never use it on the dog itself. Use the spray 15 minutes before on the materials and only let the dog come in contact with item where the Adaptil has been sprayed after this 15-minute period of absorption.

- The Adaptil® collar.

This is a pheromone collar that the dog can wear around its neck. Make sure that it is not too tight, as it will be uncomfortable for the animal. There are different sizes, look at the packaging for the right size for the individual animal. This collar is not dangerous for humans. Make sure the collar does not get wet too often as it will not work as well. If it is raining and the collar accidentally gets wet, it is not a big problem. When it dries up the the collar will give off pheromones again but do not let the dog swim with the collar on. The collar works for 1 month and then it needs to be replaced for the best effect.

2. Supplements

To reduce the stressful experience for the dog, it is possible to use a calming nutritional supplement, called Zylkène®. This product is based on a milk protein, which may help promote a relaxed feeling. You can give this product to dog owners. Make sure that you give the right dosage! The dosage of Zylkène® for dogs is:

- a. the first 2 weeks 1x per day 30 mg/kg
 - i. Depending on the weight of the dog, give 1 or more capsules at a time of the 75mg, 225mg or the 450mg.
 - ii. As an example: a dog of 30 kg then gets 1x per day 2 capsules of 450mg Zylkène®.
- b. after 2 weeks, give another 6 weeks 1x per day 15 mg/kg
 - i. Depending on the weight of the dog, you give 1 or more capsules at a time of the 75mg, 225mg or the 450mg.
 - ii. As an example: a dog of 30 kg would then receive 1 capsule of the 450 mg Zylkène®.

See also the information sheet: 'EDZNG 10-point list for dog and cat owners'.

Instructions for staff/volunteers – Refugee animals

Thank you for helping with the refugee animals. Please pay attention to the following points:

1. Leave the animals alone, do not talk to them and never touch them.
Despite the fact that the animal might have rabies (but the chance is very small), it could also be stressed even if you mean well and even if you are an animal lover.
2. Make sure that the animal owners are adequately informed about where supplies and care can be found for their animal (food/drink/bench/cats, blankets etc.).
3. Give an animal owner the note "EDZNG 10 point list for dog and cat owners" and explain it to them.
4. Warn other staff and refugees to leave the animals completely alone.

EDZNG 10-poins list for dog and cat owners

Welcome to the Netherlands, both for you and your pet. Below are 5 do's and don'ts for during your stay:

5 Do's:

1. Give your animal sufficient attention but also provide for moments of rest.
2. Get a crate and make it a safe place for your dog or cat. You can also put your cat's basket in this crate if you like. Put a blanket around it like in the picture. Do you have a cat? Take an empty cardboard box and put it in the bench. Your cat can hide or play in it.



3. Occasionally take a treat for your animal and offer it to it.
4. Take some toys (for animals) now and then and play with your dog or cat.
5. Spend a lot of time cuddling your animal, if your animal likes it.

5 Don'ts:

1. Do not let anyone touch your animal except yourself, your own family members or -if necessary- a veterinarian during your stay.
2. Do not get angry with your animal.
3. Do not take anything from your animal or do not let anyone take anything away from your animal (for example a bone, toy, etc.) even if you do it at home and your animal is not aggressive.
4. Do not let your animal run loose here. Do not allow interaction with other animals. Do not let your dog to sniff another dog friendly or a carrier of a cat.
5. Never give an animal a smack, kick, tug on the leash or lift your animal by the leash, collar, or harness.