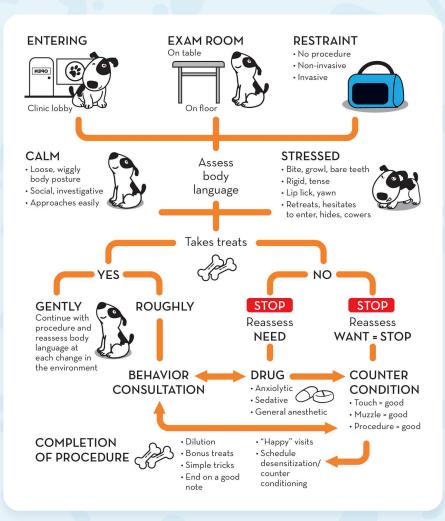# Handling Algorithm for Dogs

The Low-Stress Handling Algorithm provided below was developed by Colleen S. Koch, DVM, DACVB, and is another valuable resource to structure the dog's examination and procedure.

Being cognizant of the dog's emotional state will help build a better relationship with both owner and dog, thus increasing dog's well-being, dog owner compliance, safety, and job satisfaction for the veterinary team.

ENTERING
Clinic lobby

EXAM ROOM
On table
On floor

RESTRAINT
• No procedure
• Non-invasive
• Invasive

CALM
• Loose, wiggly body posture
• Social, investigative
• Approaches easily

Assess body language

STRESSED
• Bite, growl, bare teeth
• Rigid, tense
• Lip lick, yawn
• Retreats, hesitates to enter, hides, cowers

Takes treats

YES

NO

GENTLY / **ROUGHLY**
Continue with procedure and reassess body language at each change in the environment

STOP
Reassess
NEED

STOP
Reassess
WANT = STOP

BEHAVIOR CONSULTATION

DRUG
• Anxiolytic
• Sedative
• General anesthetic

COUNTER CONDITION
• Touch = good
• Muzzle = good
• Procedure = good

COMPLETION OF PROCEDURE
• Dilution
• Bonus treats
• Simple tricks
• End on a good note

• "Happy" visits
• Schedule desensitization/ counter conditioning