

Frequently Asked Questions – Your First Visitation

Congratulations on completing the Pet Partners® workshop and passing your evaluation! After you've completed your shadow visit (observing a current member team on a visit, without your animal) and first three mentored visits with your animal companion, you are ready to go on your first solo pet visitation. You may still have some questions of what to expect when going to visit on your own. We've collected some of our frequently asked questions from new Pet Partner® teams and addressed them here. Please feel free to contact your mentor at any time with further questions or concerns as you continue your visitations, and most of all, enjoy!

What should I do to prepare for my first visit?

It is always helpful to review the Pet Partners® and Tufts Paws for People policies before visiting. Within these policies are reminders to properly groom your pet within 24 hrs. of all visits, gather and bring all necessary paperwork (including ID badges and health certifications), and prepare a supply bag for your visitation. Be sure you have the full contact information for the supervisor at the facility you're visiting in case of any questions or last minute concerns (directions, unexpected illness, etc.).

What should I bring with me on visits?

Pet Partners advises you to bring a supply bag to cover all your and your pet's needs during a visit, including unexpected emergencies. If your pet eliminates inside the facility, be sure you have packed appropriate items to immediately clean it up and give your pet a break outside. Your supply bag should include:

- waste bags
- hand sanitizer
- copy of Rabies vaccinations and health certificates
- copy of Pet Partners ID
- Tufts Paws for People handler shirt or pet bandana
- soft brush for people to use to "groom" your animal
- treats for your animal companion for after the visit is completed
- water bowl and water
- clean up materials (paper towels, wipes, etc.)

How should I structure my first solo visit?

Set up a contact at the facility to meet you and be with you during your visitation. Prepare your contact for expectations of the first visit – limit your visitation to 20-30 minutes to not overwhelm your pet (or yourself). Remember your visit starts as soon as you put on your identification, which includes time in the parking lot or entering and leaving the facility. Our policies apply at all times when visiting on behalf of Pet Partners and Tufts Paws for People. Please keep Tufts Paws for People updated about your visits (location, frequency, etc.)

What should I do if others approach me to ask questions?

Many people are not aware of animal assisted activities, what we do, or the policies behind our work. Introducing yourself as a Pet Partner® team and explaining the program can help increase awareness. Some Pet Partner® teams like to bring handouts from Pet Partners® on what is AAA/AAT, as well as the benefits and safety aspects of such a program. Be cautious of patient confidentiality wherever your visitation may be and a positive attitude is always well received.

Anything else I should be thinking about before visiting?

Reach out if you have any further questions or concerns about a facility or any aspect of visiting. The Board of Advisors at Tufts Paws for People and your mentor are happy to help with whatever you need. You are always welcome to have additional mentored visits!

As teams continue on as Pet Partner® teams, some may feel too comfortable and may become less stringent in following the policies of Pet Partners and Tufts Paws for People. We highly encourage everyone to be diligent about policies and procedures at every visit. Accidents can happen at any time that are beyond your control and it is best to be prepared. Similarly, not all facilities and visitations are the same and you may find different challenges or benefits at each. We encourage anyone with questions to seek additional mentorship if considering another type of visitation with their pet.