

NEWSLETTER



Traveling with your Pet

Whether you are going on a local camping trip or planing international travel with "Buster", a bit of advanced planning will make your trip go smoothly.

Creature comfort:

Dogs and cats feel most comfortable in their home environment. Whether flying, driving, or camping, remember to take dishes and food that your pet is used to eating. Bring toys, a litter box and scoop for your cat, and don't forget a leash and extra time to play with your pup while you are away from home!

Pet carriers are the most common way that our pets are transported. Placing a blanket or towel with the scent of home and possibly with a synthetic phermone product may help diminish travel anxiety. It is most important to acclimate your pet to the carrier in the weeks prior to the trip. This is usually accomplished by having the carrier or crate open in a high traffic area of the home. Placing food treats and toys in the carrier for your pet to play with and making the carrier a non-threatening and hospitable place well in advance of a trip.

Taking short car rides to a local park, will increase your dog's level of comfort with the car. Cats can also benefit from short rides before the big trip.

A harness or a leash and collar are alternatives to a crate for larger dogs traveling by car. There are restraint harnesses made to safely restrain dogs to automotive seat belts. Some cars can be fit with barriers to prevent pets from becoming projectiles during an accident.

All pets need to have permanent identification when traveling. The most accurate and usable form if permanent identification is a microchip. These are placed under the skin at the shoulder area. Microchips can be scanned and pets can be returned to owners even if collars have been removed or have fallen off. Collars are by far the most visible form of identification and should also be used. Collars should have both permanent ID including phone number and address, as well as information about how to reach owners at the destination. There is a risk that a collar can get caught in the cage door and cause choking. Therefore

Quick Facts:

- Prepare in advance for a smooth and safe trip.
- Be sure to have proper identification of your pet that is permanent, clear and easy to read. Carry a current photo of your pet with you!
- Learn the requirements for travel to your destination well in advance. Schedule appointments for vaccines and certificates appropriately.
- Contact hotels and carriers that are pet friendly early to schedule your trip.
- Use 'good citizen' practices on vacation. Always clean up behind your pet.
- If anything seems wrong when you arrive, contact a veterinarian immediately.

Have a great time!

a breakaway collar is probably the best kind if it is going to be left on while the pet is away from its family. All crates used for transporting pets must be identified with the owners name, and contact information in large visible letters.

Health check

The purpose of the health exam is to assure that animals do not carry certain communicable diseases into the destination state or country. Just as important to our patients, we want to assure that traveling will not cause or worsen any health problems for the pet. For instance, cats and dogs traveling to the southern US, during winter months, must still be protected against heartworms and fleas.



Dogs and cats occasionally suffer from motion sickness even after habituation to the car. We are now able to prevent much of the motion sickness with medication.

A trip to the veterinary office may be required to have the necessary vaccinations, treatments, or tests before a trip. Accredited veterinarians can complete forms required by airlines and or international authorities. For travel to the 48 contiguous states, proof of rabies vaccination and a health certificate may be all that is required when driving. However, for travel to the state of Hawaii, or for international travel it is important to check with that state or the destination country's consulate or embassy for information (see below).

Travel by car

More and more motel and hotel chains are now catering to clients with pets. Rest stops along the interstate highways have pet friendly areas for walking dogs. Be sure to stop every 2 hours and let your dog walk and relax. Cats and dogs should not be fed for about 6 hours prior to leaving on a trip. They should always have access to fresh

water so that they don't get dehydrated. For trips less than 4 hours, most cats can do without a litter pan. If a trip is longer than 4 hours, your cat's carrier should be large enough to accommodate a litter pan. 'Potty pads' can be used at the bottom of carriers to absorb urine in case of accidents.

Travel by plane

Airline travel has been controversial for many years. Dogs that are larger must be placed in the cargo area. The Animal Welfare Acts regulate the airlines treatment of pets riding in the 'hold' of the plane. These areas are now always pressurized and heated. However, the runway area may be noisy, hot or cold, depending on the season. When using an airline, it is important to check for the companies' policies regarding health certificates, crate requirements, and weather related restrictions. (See below of links to many of the airlines.) Plan travel during less hectic times and schedule direct flights.

Proper forms:

"International health certificates for the export of animals from the United States are completed by the accredited veterinarian who certifies herd and animal health status, conducts tests, and records test results for the individual animals being exported. Completed and signed international health certificates for the export of animals from the United States must be endorsed by a Veterinary Services area office in order to be valid." (USDA website)
The European Union has developed its own International Health Certificate for animals



being transported to its member countries. In addition, the United Kingdom has separate rules for animals crossing its borders. The island nations of Japan, Australia, UK, and many of the Caribbean nations have other special requirements.

Many international requirements have time restrictions over months to weeks prior to the travel date. It is important that owners are aware of when their pet needs to be examined and when certain tests and vaccines need to be scheduled.

No matter what type of transportation you choose, bring a copy of your pet's records with you.

Arrival

Once arriving at your destination, let Buster have a good stretch, a good meal and some fun. Check local information for dog parks and pet friendly activities.

HELPFUL TRAVEL WEB SITES:

1. Traveling with pets: USDA general information site. This site links to other helpful sites regarding interstate and international travel including airline links. http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/pet_travel/pet_travel_basics.shtml
2. Links to embassy and consulate contact information for international travel to specific countries. <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>.
3. Travel to the United Kingdom: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/index.htm>
4. Good general information about traveling with pets. http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/caring_for_pets_when_you_travel/what_you_need_before_you_travel.html
5. Three commercial websites with information about travel with pets: <http://www.dogfriendly.com/>, <http://www.petfriendlytravel.com/>, <http://www.pettravelcenter.com/>