

# TRAVEL

## Travelling with your pet



Being able to travel with your pet makes pet ownership even more enjoyable. If you're a dog owner you may wish to enjoy the beautiful British countryside, take them for a day out to the beach or join in the fun at country shows or village fetes. Even if you aren't interested in holidaying or day trips with your dog, there will always be the occasions where your pet needs to travel in a car (for example to visit the vets or moving house). None of this is appealing if your pet hates to travel. They can easily become stressed, fearful and might even suffer from travel sickness. Each bad experience can contribute to the problem getting worse. There are ways to get your pet accustomed to car travel, we recommend;

- Start with short journeys and gradually build up to longer distances
- Allow fresh air to circulate by opening a window
- Drive carefully avoiding sudden braking or acceleration whenever possible
- Take regular breaks on longer journeys allowing dogs to get out the car.
- For dogs, if they associate car journeys with something enjoyable like a walk, it is likely to reduce their fear and anxiety.



There are medications and supplements available which can help your pet to travel more comfortably if needed, some can be bought over the counter and others require veterinary prescription. If you would like to know more, please speak to a member of our staff.

## Travelling abroad with your pet

It has become much easier in recent years to travel abroad with your pet and it can be a great experience. The rules for taking pets across country borders has eased slightly however if you wish to them to come back into the UK there are some strict guidelines. These are in place because of the presence of disease elsewhere in the world which we don't have here in the UK. This not only serves to keep your pet safe but also prevents the spread of disease to UK pet population.

### Infectious pet diseases abroad

Taking your pet abroad, whether it be temporary or permanent, exposes your pet to illnesses and diseases that aren't present in the UK. British animals appear to be more susceptible to these diseases, as unlike their foreign counterparts, they have not developed any kind of natural resistance in the population.

**Rabies** - This extremely dangerous virus is transmitted through a bite from an infected animal. It is also zoonotic (can spread to people) and is almost always fatal. Rabies affects the neurological system of the animal and symptoms worsen over time including behaviour changes (most notably aggression), seizures, disorientation, paralysis, coma and ultimately death. There has been no known cases of rabies in the UK for over a century although it is still a serious problem in much of the rest of the world. Vaccination is highly recommended for all travelling pets and compulsory if you wish to bring them back to UK. Rabies can affect all animals.

**Leishmaniasis** - This is an infectious disease of dogs transmitted by sand flies, especially in the southern continent in countries bordering the Mediterranean, like Spain, Italy and Greece. A dog can be bitten up to 100 times in an hour during the peak sand fly season from May to September. Starting with hair loss, fever, weight loss and skin sores, the disease progresses to cause multiple organ damage. It is an incurable disease, complex to treat and fatal without attention, so prevention is the best way.

**Heartworm** - As the name suggests, this is a parasitic worm which lives in the heart of the animal. Although it can affect cats, cases are rare and they naturally have resistance to the worm. In dogs, however, it is far more dangerous. The adult worms damage the blood vessels and heart of the dog, causing coughing, weakness, weight loss and eventually heart failure. Symptoms can take years to manifest. The larvae of the worm live in the bloodstream and therefore get carried by blood-sucking mosquitoes, and transmitted to other animals. Unfortunately treatment of the disease can be almost as dangerous for the dog as the heartworm itself, this is why prevention of the disease when abroad is so important.



**Babesiosis** - This serious tick-borne (transmitted by ticks) disease in dogs which destroys white blood cells. Symptoms include fever, anaemia, lethargy, high temperature, blood in the urine and jaundice. It can take up to three days before the feeding tick transmits the infection. It is a potentially fatal disease and some dogs can die within a few days of showing signs.

**Erlichiosis** - This is another tick-borne disease affecting dogs. Symptoms include vomiting, fever anaemia and it also compromises the dogs bloods clotting ability. The disease is most often fatal and some dogs die within a few days of infection. Although all dogs of all ages are at risk of the disease, some breeds appear to be particularly susceptible, such as German Shepherds.

## Disease prevention

Prevention is better than cure they say; and this is most definitely the case with these infectious diseases. There are vaccines available from your vet to prevent rabies and leishmaniasis. Prevention of the other diseases (heartworm, babesiosis and erlichiosis) is targeted towards the carriers of the disease - sand flies, mosquitos and ticks. Monthly administration of worming and spot-on medications will hugely reduce the risk of the parasites biting your pet. It is also advisable to keep your pets indoors between dusk and dawn when abroad as this is when more parasite are out. In the case of the tick-borne diseases, it can take anywhere between 12 hours to three days to transmit the disease. We recommend a "tick check" once or twice daily while abroad, and remove any ticks as soon as possible with a correct method (see out tick information sheet).

## PETS passports

Travelling to and from qualifying PETS countries is possible once the appropriate PETS passport has been issued. This allows dogs, cats and ferrets to return to the UK without the need for quarantine.

To be issued with a PETS passport it requires your pet:

- Be over 12 weeks old
- Have a identification microchip
- Be vaccinated against rabies

You may travel 21 days after the rabies vaccination. Rabies boosters should be given every 3 years (and not a day over) but each country has it's own rules on frequency of vaccination - we recommend you contact DEFRA to ensure you know the rules of the destination country.

To cross the border back into the UK there is a statutory requirement for dogs to have a veterinary certified tapeworm treatment between 24 and 120hrs (1 to 5 days) before embarking to travel home. For trips of up to 4 days duration, this treatment may be done at one of our Surgeries prior to departing. This must be a product containing praziquantal, (we can advise which products are suitable). It is no longer necessary to get certified tick treatment to travel home, but we would strongly recommend tick protection while abroad to prevent the tick-borne disease mentioned earlier.

## Travelling to and from non-listed countries

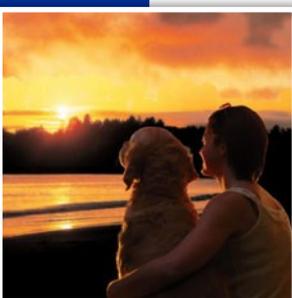
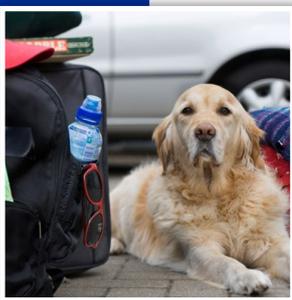
Not all countries are in the PETS passport scheme. You will need to contact DEFRA to confirm the requirements of pet entry into your destination country.

To enter the UK from an unlisted country, your pet must :

- Have a identification microchip
- Be vaccinated against rabies
- Have a blood test at least 30 days after rabies vaccination to verify immunity (travel back to the UK is permitted 3 calendar months after the blood sample is taken)
- Have an official veterinary certificate from the other country
- Dogs must have tapeworm treatment (as described above).

**If you have any questions, please do ask our staff at any of our surgeries, they will do their best to help.**

**Alternatively visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search "pet travel"**



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