

KEEPING YOUR PET HEALTHY THIS SEASON

PART ONE: TRAVELING WITH YOUR PETS

Traveling with your pet can be both exciting and stressful. Prior to making your travel plans, it is important to assess whether or not it is appropriate to bring your pet along. Factors such as personality, medical conditions and age play a major role. Consulting with your vet can help you make the best decision for your family. If you do decide to bring Fido along, here are some important tips to make sure everyone is happy and healthy.

Medical Health

Make a check-up appointment with your vet prior to travel and be certain to have all of your pet's necessary vaccines, preventative medicine and related paperwork up to date within ten days of your departure date.

* Note, some states require rabies paperwork when crossing state lines.

About Medicating Your Pet

There are many non- pharmaceutical options to keep your pet calm during travel. Your tone of voice, safely bringing a favorite toy or blanket – all can have a soothing effect on your dog or cat. As always, consult with your vet regarding your pet's specific circumstances.

Be Prepared for Emergencies!

1. Bring a "pet friendly" first aid kit and familiarize yourself with it.
*Remember, not all items in a first aid kit dedicated to humans are safe or appropriate for animals and note that it is always important to see a professional right away.
2. Familiarize yourself with emergency veterinary clinics en route and at your destination. Bring up to date medical information, medications, and current veterinary information.
3. Make sure your pet has all appropriate tags. Use stainless steel ID tags that include: Pet's name, your name and contact information, and any medical conditions.
4. Consider micro chipping. In the event that their tags are lost, most shelters, clinics and animal related facilities can read this information quickly, upping the likelihood of a swift, safe return should your pet get lost.

Crating Your Pet –It’s for their safety!

Some people feel bad about locking their loved one in a “cage”. However, know that this is very important for their health and safety.

When traveling by car, crating your pet is the safest means of transport. This will prevent dangerous driver distraction and keep your pet from being jarred around, or worse. Would you let your children ride in a car without being buckled in?

1. Before crating for a trip, make sure your pet has burnt off excess energy
2. Make certain there are no loose items such as leashes, collars, bones, toys etc. or other potentially dangerous objects in the crate
3. It is important to keep a normal tone when preparing to crate your pet. Expressing concern or worry can also worry your pet

When traveling by plane, it is also important to take these additional measures:

1. Make certain to have a USDA certified travel crate
2. Make sure the crate is CLEARLY identified with your name, the pet’s name, address and phone number

On Specific Types of Travel

1. AIR TRAVEL
 - a. Book a direct flight whenever possible
 - b. Communicate with the crew and staff. Make sure the entire crew knows that you are traveling with a loved one below deck
 - c. As mentioned earlier, make sure that your crate is USDA certified and clearly labeled with your name, the pet’s name, address and phone number
2. ROAD TRIPS
 - a. Practice. Prepare your pet for long rides by taking a series of short ones first
 - b. Use a secure crate, clear of all potentially harmful items
 - c. Bring rabies vaccination history. Though rare, some interstate crossings do require this paperwork
 - d. Make a travel kit. We all do better with a well organized travel kit, and that includes your dog or cat. First aid kit, fresh water, a bowl, leash, collar, food and treats.
 - e. Familiarize yourself with pet friendly pit-stops along your route
 - f. **NEVER leave your pet alone in a vehicle no matter what the temperature. Even on a cool day your vehicle can heat up rapidly proving deadly very quickly. Cracking a window won’t save them.**

Boarding Your Pet

Being away from our furry family is difficult, even when we are looking forward that long awaited vacation. Some pet owners opt to use boarding facilities, and this can be more appropriate in some cases. Many businesses now offer Pet Vacations! So if you are going away, consider pampering them too! Either way, make sure of these 5 things before you board.

1. Make sure Fido is up on his vaccinations. While most reputable facilities require proof of vaccinations prior to housing your pet, a responsible pet owner will make certain these important vaccinations are up to date
2. Know who you are boarding with! Get references, recommendations from your trusted vet – or in some cases, vets offer boarding services directly.
3. Tour the facility. Is it well maintained? Do the dogs get regular supervised exercise? Is clean water available to them 24/7?
4. Communicate very concisely any special dietary, medical and behavioral needs
5. Ask the question - what is your procedure in the event of an emergency. Is the facility manned 24/7?

Coming Up in Our Next Newsletter:

Keeping Your Pet Safe During Events and Holidays