

TRAVELING BY AIR

- Federal regulations require that dogs and cats be at least 8 weeks old and weaned at least five days before flying.
- Check with your airline when booking your flight to make sure you understand and comply with its requirements for pet travel. Different airlines may have different rules. Be sure to note all applicable restrictions, including whether and how you may keep your pet with you in the passenger cabin.
- Talk to your veterinarian about whether and when to feed your pet prior to, during, and after air travel.
- Consult your veterinarian before giving your pet any tranquilizers or sedatives. These can increase the risk of heart or respiratory problems and generally are not allowed by airlines.
- Reconfirm your flight arrangements the day before you leave to ensure there have been no unexpected flight changes.
- Before entering the airport, exercise your pet if appropriate. Personally place them in the travel crate or carrier, and make sure the crate or carrier is securely closed.
- Carry your pet's photo and health information with you on the plane for easy identification of your pet should something go wrong.
- If your pet will be traveling in the cabin with you:
 - Arrange to check in as late as possible to reduce the amount of time your pet will have to spend in the busy terminal.
 - Remove your pet from the travel carrier just prior to security screening, BEFORE passing the carrier through the X-ray tunnel.
 - After security screening, collect your carrier, take it and your pet away from the conveyor belt and to a nearby quiet area, and immediately return your pet to the carrier.
 - When boarding the plane, let the flight attendant know that your pet is also on the plane.

- If your pet is not traveling in the cabin with you, promptly pick them up at your destination.
- If you are traveling internationally or to Hawaii, consult your veterinarian and/or your state's veterinary services district office or the destination country's embassy or consulate about additional travel restrictions or quarantine requirements..

Defective crates or carriers are the most common cause of escaped or injured animals during air travel.

Crates used to contain pets in the cargo hold during air travel generally must meet these requirements:

- Large enough to allow the pet to stand (without touching the top of the cage), sit up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds require one size larger than normal.
- Strong, hard shell, free of interior protrusions
- Secure, spring-loaded locking system
- Strong handle or grips on the long (depth) side of the crate
- Solid, leak-proof bottom covered with plenty of absorbent material
- Adequately ventilated (on at least three sides for domestic flights or four for international flights) so airflow is not impeded
- No wheels
- Appropriately and clearly labeled with the following:
 - Your name, home address, home phone number, and destination contact information
 - “Live Animals” stickers with arrows indicating the crate's upright position
- Other requirements as dictated by the airline or type of travel (interstate or international)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRAVELING WITH PETS, VISIT:

American Veterinary Medical Association
avma.org/PetTravel

TRAVELING WITH YOUR PET

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Planning and preparation are important when traveling with family pets. Follow these tips to make the trip more enjoyable for you all. Your veterinarian can help you work out the details.

PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL

First, it's important to consider whether travel is right for your pet. Some pets may be uncomfortable with travel due to illness, injury, temperament, or other concerns. Also, brachycephalic (short-nosed) pets like Pugs or Persians are more at risk than others of overheating or breathing problems during travel—especially air travel. If your pet fits one of these categories, and it's not necessary to take them with you, consider other options. These could include hiring a reliable pet sitter or boarding your pet at a veterinarian-recommended facility. If you must travel with your pet, such as when moving to a new home, talk to your veterinarian about how to make the trip as safe, comfortable, and successful as possible for your pet.

It's also important to think about your destination, as this may affect your plans. Interstate or international travel can require certain preparations that may need to start six months or more in advance.

PREPARING FOR THE TRIP

- Ensure your pet has identification tags with up-to-date information.
- Consider having your pet microchipped if that isn't already done, and be sure to submit your home contact information for the microchip registration. Certain destinations require that your pet be microchipped, generally with a certain type of chip. And microchips can improve the chance of your pet being returned home if you should become separated.
- If your pet is already microchipped and your destination requires this, check to ensure it's the right type of chip. Your veterinarian can help you with this. Your veterinarian also can help you check to make sure your home contact information in the microchip registry is up-to-date.
- Take time to help your pet get used to the crate or carrier in which they will travel as well as any harnesses or other restraints designed to keep your pet safe. Placing a familiar toy or blanket in the carrier can help your pet feel more comfortable.

- Provide opportunities for your pet to get used to car travel before taking any long car trips.
- Schedule a veterinary examination to ensure your pet is healthy enough for travel and protected against diseases that may be common where you're going.
 - Ask your veterinarian about flea, tick, and heartworm prevention, and make sure your pet is up-to-date on their rabies vaccine. Also discuss what other vaccines may be important for areas you will be visiting.
 - If you are traveling to another state or country, you will need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection issued within 10 days before any air travel or, generally, within 30 days before any other type of travel. This certificate needs to be signed by a federally accredited veterinarian, and not all veterinarians meet this requirement. Call ahead to find out if your veterinarian is federally accredited, or if they can refer you to someone who is.
 - Some countries or states also may require that certain tests be performed, such as measuring your pet's rabies vaccine titer.
- If you will be staying with friends or family along the way, ask them in advance if your pet is welcome.
- If you plan to stay in a hotel, motel, park, or campground, find out if pets are welcome; if there are any breed or size restrictions; if any paperwork is required; and what features they may offer to meet your pet's needs.
- If you are flying with your pet, make sure you're aware of the airline's requirements for pets before you book the flight.
 - If you're planning to have your pet travel in the cargo hold rather than with you in the passenger cabin, check whether your airline requires a health and acclimation certificate. This document essentially indicates your pet's readiness for travel and any constraints, such as the acceptable range of travel temperature. This would be in addition to any necessary Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, and it needs to be signed by your veterinarian within 10 days before your planned travel date.

Find out your destination's requirements for visiting pets.

Begin planning early! Arrangements for interstate or international may take at least six months.

- Check your airline's current pet travel policies regarding restrictions on breeds and size, weather conditions, time of year, and charges for checked crates.
- Book a nonstop flight, and avoid layovers and busy holidays.
- During warm weather months, choose early morning or late evening flights, when the temperatures are generally not as hot. In colder months, choose afternoon flights, when the temperatures are generally warmer.

PACKING FOR TRAVEL

Just as you have your own travel needs, your pet has needs too. Here are some things to pack for them:

- Proof of vaccination (especially rabies) and copies of relevant medical records
- Certificate of Veterinary Inspection if crossing state or international borders
- Pet identification:
 - Collar, tags, and microchip documentation
 - Pet travel tag (if possible) with information on where you're staying while away from home
 - Recent pet photograph
- Leash
- Portable kennel
- Food and water bowls
- Enough food to last the entire trip
- Water, in case there is none available at a stop
- All medications that your pet will need during the trip (Don't expect to be able to get refills while on your trip.)
- First aid kit
- Emergency information: phone numbers of your veterinarian, a national poison control hotline, and a 24-hour emergency veterinary hospital at your destination

DURING THE TRIP

- If your pet must be left alone in a hotel room, place a "Do not disturb" sign on the door and inform housekeeping staff and the front desk.
- Perform a daily health check on your pet while away from home. In unfamiliar surroundings, your pet's appetite, energy, and behavior may change.
- Visit a local veterinarian if you are concerned about any physical or behavioral changes.
- Try to maintain your regular routines for feeding your pet and providing opportunities to relieve themselves.

TRAVELING BY CAR

- If your pet has a problem with carsickness, let your veterinarian know. Depending on your pet's health, your veterinarian may prescribe medication that will help your pet feel more comfortable during long trips.
- Safely restrain dogs. If the car is equipped with airbags, keep dogs from riding in the passenger seat. Never allow dogs to sit on the driver's lap. You can get harnesses, tethers, and other accessories to secure pets during car travel at most pet supply retailers.
- Keep your dog from riding with their head outside the car window. Although your pet may enjoy this, airborne dirt or other debris can injure your pet's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.
- Confine cats to a cage or carrier. This will help them feel secure, prevent them from crawling under the driver's feet, and prevent escape from the car while driving or during stops.
- Never leave pets unattended in a car.
- On long trips, feed your pet small portions of food and water. Plan to stop every two hours to allow dogs to exercise and relieve themselves. Make sure they're wearing a collar, tags, and leash when outside the car.

TRAVELING BY BUS OR TRAIN

While many trains allow cats or small dogs under certain conditions, most states prohibit animals from riding on buses. Exceptions are made for service animals accompanying their person in need. Consult your local bus or railway service for current information and restrictions.