



Travelling With Your Pet

Introduction

Taking your pet on holiday with you to continental Europe has become increasingly popular since the Pet Travel Scheme was introduced in 2000. The rules for the scheme were simplified in 2012, but must be followed correctly to avoid your pet being refused re-entry to the UK. There are parasites in parts of Europe that are not present in the UK, depending on where you are travelling you may need to consider additional parasite prevention.

The Pet Passport

The Pet Passport allows dogs, cats and ferrets to travel between any EU member countries, as well as Croatia, Gibraltar, Norway, San Marino and Switzerland. It is possible to travel to other countries, but different rules may apply.

1. Your pet must be microchipped before any of the other procedures are carried out so that it can be properly identified.
2. After your pet has been microchipped it must be vaccinated against rabies. Your pet is able to travel from 21 days after the vaccination. As long as the vaccination is kept up to date the 21 day wait will not apply after subsequent vaccinations.
3. Once your pet has been microchipped and vaccinated you will be issued with a Pet Passport.
4. Your pet must travel with an approved transport company on an authorised route. Most cross channel ferries and the Channel Tunnel are included.
5. If your pet is flying the airline is likely to require a health check with a veterinary surgeon a few days before the flight. You would be advised of this by the airline when booking.
6. Before returning to the UK from most EU countries dogs must be treated by a veterinary surgeon for tapeworms. This must be carried out between 24 and 120 hours before your arrival in the UK. Tapeworm treatment is not required if you are returning directly, without passing through another country, from Finland, Ireland, Malta or Norway.

Further information is available on the DEFRA website:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/>

Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is a severe, infectious disease that is transmitted by sand flies. It occurs commonly throughout the Tropics and especially the Mediterranean coastal area of Southern Europe. Dogs can be bitten up to 100 times an hour during the sand fly season (May to September) and sand flies often feed at night. Signs of the disease are very variable and in some cases, may take a few months to several years to manifest after a visit abroad. Affected dogs commonly may develop a fever, show signs of hair loss (particularly around the eyes), lose weight and develop skin sores and nail disease. Unfortunately, as the disease progresses, many organs may become involved leading to problems like anaemia, arthritis in many joints, eye, liver and kidney disease. The disease, if untreated is fatal and even with complex therapy is not curable, with affected animals being permanently infected, so prevention is the best course of action. It is possible, though rare, for humans to catch Leishmania from dogs.

1. Dogs should be kept indoors from one hour before dusk until one hour after sunrise. Insecticides should be used to control flies indoors.
2. Insecticide collars are available from veterinary surgeons to help protect your dog from sand flies, some products need to be applied 2 weeks before travel.
3. **A Vaccine is now available** – Discuss this option with one of our Vets

Ehrlichiosis

Ehrlichia is tick-borne infection transmitted by ticks, which is passed on when a tick feeds on the blood of an infected dog or cat and then bites another. This disease is widely distributed throughout the world and is particularly prevalent in the Mediterranean basin and the Rhone Valley. Symptoms of this disease vary widely and may include immunosuppression, severe depression, fever, swollen glands, nose bleeds and haemorrhages under the skin and elsewhere because the blood clotting ability is affected. Less common signs include vomiting, nasal discharge, lameness and severe inflammatory changes in the eyes. Chronic infections may progress to chronic debility, weight loss, arthritis and neurological disease including convulsions. Cases of longstanding infection are less likely to respond and many affected dogs often die.

1. It is vital to protect your pet from ticks, you should check your pet every day.
2. Insecticide sprays, collars and spot-ons are available from your veterinary surgeon to help protect your pet from ticks.

Heartworm

Heartworm is a disease primarily of dogs, although cats are also at risk. It is transmitted by mosquito bites and is common in Southern Europe, the USA and many tropical countries. After infection, the larval worms are present in the bloodstream and develop inside the heart and the blood supply to the lungs and can be transferred to an unaffected dog via a mosquito bite. Signs may take several years to manifest and include a soft cough, tiredness, weakness, loss of weight and condition. Eventually heart failure may ensue, leading to death. Signs of the disease in cats are often more variable. Attempted treatment of advanced infections can be fatal as the dead adult worms can prevent blood flow to the lungs.

1. Avoid mosquito infected areas.
2. Monthly spot-ons and tablets are available from your veterinary surgeon to prevent heartworm infection.
3. Treatment should begin before you travel and continue for at least one treatment after you return.

Babesiosis

This disease is a serious protozoal disease transmitted by ticks, which is caused by the *Babesia* organisms that invade, multiply in and destroy red blood cells. Tick areas are relatively common on the continent with the condition babesiosis being particularly prevalent in France. Affected animals develop fever, anaemia, weakness, lethargy, weight loss, anorexia and blood in the urine. The animals may also show signs of jaundice. Susceptible dogs can die within a couple of days of the clinical signs appearing. British dogs are particularly vulnerable because they will have never encountered the disease and therefore will have no resistance to it. Treatment involves specific drug therapy alongside supportive therapy and care, such as blood transfusions in severely anaemic dogs.

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Hepatozoonosis

This is a widespread disease of both dogs and cats living in warmer climates and is caused by a protozoan parasite carried by a bloodsucking insect, mite or, most commonly, a tick. Signs can include fever, lethargy, weight loss, anaemia and secondary liver, lung and kidney disease.

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