

Foreign travel



The Pet Travel Scheme enables pet cats and dogs to travel to and from the UK without having to go into quarantine (see our leaflet Pet Travel Scheme for more details).

However, before deciding to take advantage of this scheme, we recommend that you consider the potential health implications of taking your pet abroad. Your pet's temperament, age and general health will all affect their ability to cope with the long journeys and any change of climate.

It is now possible to arrange pet travel insurance for holidays outside the UK. As with our own travel insurance, essentials include cover for unexpected veterinary treatment, third party liability, and emergency repatriation. Also on offer is recompense for holiday cancellation, advertising and reward for a lost or stolen pet and quarantine expenses in exceptional circumstances.

Lost pets

A pan-European database allows co-ordination of microchip data from every European country so that a lost pet can be reunited with its owner.

Illness

Contracting an 'exotic' disease whilst abroad is a potential worry, as your pet will have no natural resistance, and for most of these diseases there is no specific vaccination. In addition, there is the risk of infection spreading to other animals or humans once back home.

There are four diseases commonly found in European areas likely to be visited by UK holiday-makers, mostly spread by insects.

Leishmaniasis is transmitted by sand flies and can have an incubation period (the lag time between infection and showing symptoms) varying from one month to several years. Many organs can be affected and the disease is ultimately life-threatening. Although humans can also be infected via sand fly bites, direct transmission from infected dogs to humans is rare. Sand fly bites are very difficult to avoid but the use of a collar impregnated with a synthetic pyrethroid repellent may give some protection. Sandflies are named after their colouring and are mainly found in hilly and wooded areas.

Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes and has an incubation period of 6-7 months. The worms can cause severe lung and heart problems in pets but are rarely transmitted to humans. Preventative treatment is available from us – a simple 'spot-on' preparation, used monthly, is safe and effective and should be started before you leave the UK.

Babesiosis has an incubation period of 10-21 days and causes severe life-threatening anaemia. Treatment is rarely completely successful, so that the disease often recurs after stress.

Erlchiosis is seen especially in young animals and the German Shepherd seems particularly susceptible. After an incubation period of 8-20 days, there is invasion of the white blood cells and interference with blood clotting. As with Babesiosis, despite treatment, the disease may become chronic and recur at intervals in the future. Both Babesiosis and Erlchiosis are transmitted by tick bites, so tick control is vitally important in the prevention of these diseases. It should be started before departure from the UK and continue throughout your stay. Daily grooming with removal of any ticks will further decrease the risk of disease transmission.

Due to the increased health risks, you may wish to avoid taking your pet abroad. If you do decide to travel with your pet, some simple precautions are advisable:

- Be guided by your vet on health matters and disease prevention
- Take prescribed medication for your pet with you (this might include travel sickness remedies)
- Use a suitable external parasite treatment before starting your journey
- Take out travel insurance
- Attach an extra collar tag giving your holiday address

We offer pre-travel clinics to check your pet's microchip and discuss health matters, with appropriate medication being prescribed as needed. The clinic fee is waived when you buy these medications from us at the time.

Please contact the surgery on 01435 864422 to book an appointment at least 2 weeks prior to departure.

