

Travel Advice

Travelling abroad •

What are the risks to my pet?

Many people worry about their pet catching obscure diseases when abroad. The risks are minimal but there are important steps you can take to minimise these risks. Rabies is actually incredibly rare and your pet will be vaccinated against this. The more concerning diseases are spread by ticks and biting insects. These are prevalent in the south of France and Mediterranean. You can reduce the risk to your pet by routine treatments, which are best started before you travel. UK ticks do not spread these diseases and are much less of a worry. Ticks on your pet whilst abroad should be prevented and taken much more seriously. In Europe ticks and biting flies can spread very serious diseases including heartworm and other blood borne infections.

There are products available which help prevent parasites and diseases which we do not normally see in the UK.

Please feel free to discuss your travel plans with us so that we may provide you with appropriate treatment for your pet.

(possibly a link to Bayers travelling diseases website and map of distribution of diseases)

What procedures must I complete so my pet can travel on holiday with me?

Firstly, your pet must be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies. This can be done once your pet is 3 months of age or older. Then a blood sample is taken 3 weeks after the rabies vaccination to confirm the presence of protective antibodies. Once these results are back we can issue you with a pet passport which will allow you both to travel to countries participating in the pet travel scheme and return to the UK without quarantine. Return to the UK is not permitted until **6 months after** the blood test has been taken and passed. This 6 month rule means that trips often need to be planned around a year in advance. To be allowed entry into the UK your pet will need to be treated against ticks and tapeworms 24 to 48 hours before entry into the UK. This treatment will need to be done by a vet and the details of this treatment entered on your passport.

Only certain routes of transport are permitted on your return journey – do make sure you book your pet onto ferry or tunnel as well as yourself. There is usually an additional charge for this!

(link to defra website for qualifying countries and more information)

How long is the passport valid for?

In most cases, our rabies vaccinations provide 3 years protection so your first passport is valid until 3 years after the date of the first vaccination.

How do I ensure that the passport is kept up to date?

Take particular care to check the renewal date for the rabies vaccination on your pet's passport. Make a note to remind yourself not to miss this date, as even running 1 day late will mean having to restart the whole procedure including the 6 month wait after taking the blood sample. We do not provide a reminder service for this at present. This is because many people change addresses over this time period and sadly we cannot be held liable for failures in any reminder scheme.

Travel Tips

Remember to pack a 'travel bag' for your pet including his bedding, food, water supply and things like his favourite toys. Your pet should also have plenty of room to turn around and lie down while you're travelling. You may wish to take a pet first aid kit and our staff will be happy to discuss this or any other travel queries you may have.

Travelling Abroad With Your Pet

More and more pets are travelling abroad with their owners under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) which enables dogs, cats and ferrets to return to the UK after travelling to an increasing number of destinations without quarantine.

For your pet to be eligible to travel under PETS, there are a number of guidelines which must be adhered to.

The Procedures

- Your pet should be microchipped.
- After the microchip has been fitted, your pet must be vaccinated against rabies.
- Your vet will then carry out a blood test on your pet to ensure that the vaccine has worked and will protect him against rabies. Pets can't enter or re-enter the UK until 6 calendar months after this blood test has confirmed protection against rabies.
- Following this confirmation, your vet will issue you with an official PETS passport.
- 24-48 hours prior to entering or returning to the UK, you will have to arrange for an authorised vet to treat your pet for tapeworm and ticks. This treatment will be recorded on a separate official certificate of treatment.

- Arrange for your animal to travel on an authorised route - Your animal must enter England from a PETS country travelling on an authorised route with an approved transport company.

In addition to the stipulations that you must adhere to if you're travelling abroad with your pet, it's also advisable to protect him against travelling diseases such as leishmaniasis, heartworm, babesiosis and ehrlichiosis .

The six month rule

Your pet may not enter the UK under PETS until six months have passed from the date that your vet took the blood sample which led to a successful test result. Once the vet has signed the passport and that six month period has passed, the document becomes valid for your pet to enter the UK. This wait is necessary because an animal infected with rabies before vaccination would not be protected by the vaccine. Six months is the time needed for most infected animals to display any clinical signs of the disease.

When to vaccinate

Your pet must be at least three months old before it is vaccinated. This can be done any time after your pet has been fitted with a microchip. Before vaccinating your pet, make sure your vet checks its microchip number and enters it on your pet's vaccination record. If your pet has been vaccinated against rabies before it was identified by a microchip, it will have to be fitted with a microchip and vaccinated again. This is to make sure that your pet is correctly identified when it is vaccinated.

Re-vaccination (boosters)

After your pet has been vaccinated and successfully blood tested, it will need regular booster vaccinations. These must be given by the 'valid until' date on the PETS certificate or pet passport. If this date is missed your animal will not meet the conditions of the scheme and will have to be vaccinated and blood tested again. The 6 month rule will then apply from the date the new blood sample is taken. If your pet always has its booster on time, it will not need another blood test.

Finally, remember to pack a 'travel bag' for your pet including his bedding, food, water supply and things like his favourite toys. Your pet should also have plenty of room to turn around and lie down while you're on route. For further information on travelling abroad with your pet, please speak to any of our staff.