

Pets and People
by
Larry A. Lamb, DVM

Traveling With Your Pet

Traveling with your pet can be lots of fun . However, it is very important to make preparations in advance which will facilitate a more pleasant journey

First, if your dog has not been used to being in a car, take them for short trips, always before a meal rather than soon afterwards. This will help avoid car or motion-sickness. Make the association with the car ride rewarding for the dog by giving a treat or meal as soon as the trip is over.

Motion-sickness in pets is the result of the effect of irregular motion on the balance mechanism of the middle ear. The signs are restlessness, salivation and vomiting. Waiting at least six hours between the last meal and traveling will help. In severe cases of motion sickness, your veterinarian can prescribe medication to be given before a journey. Some of these medications may be sedatives and it is very important to remember that a sedated dog may not respond appropriately when let off a leash when walked. Therefore, when traveling, always keep them on a leash when away from the car.

I strongly recommend that dogs ride inside the car rather than in the back of a pick-up or inside a camper. Jumping out of a moving vehicle can be catastrophic to the pet and a vacation or day trip. When others are entering the car don't allow the dog to run and jump in the car, especially near the driver .Make sure there is plenty of fresh air and that the temperature is not too hot towards the back of the car where the dog will likely be. If you need to open a window, keep it closed enough that the dog cannot stick his head out of the window and be injured by flying insects or pieces of gravel from the road.

Once the journey begins, stop at regular intervals, generally every two to four hours to give your dog a chance to exercise, relieve himself, and have a drink of water. When you stop, secure the dog with a leash BEFORE you open the door. Observe notices for pet exercise areas and have a plastic bag supply in the car for clean-up purposes.

Never leave your dog alone in a car, unless you can observe them frequently. The temperature can quickly rise to a dangerous level, causing heat stroke, even on a cool day. Leaving a window partially open may not be enough and may invite trouble if a child pokes a finger into the car.

A frequently asked question involves finding places to stay when you travel with your pet. Many bookstores have guides available. The directories of the many hotel chains usually indicate whether dogs are allowed (the number of rooms for pets may be restricted so check ahead). The Internet is a rich source of information on travel with pets such as www.petswelcome.com, www.travelpets.com, and www.petfriendlytravel.com. The AAA/CAA club also has useful resources for pet travel. Takeyourpet.com is web based club offering a directory of lodgings accepting dogs, veterinary hospitals, boarding facilities, etc. Traveling with your pet is becoming

more common than ever before and restaurants and lodging facilities are responding to this trend.

I recommend my clients take a first aid kit when traveling away from home with their pets. You can purchase many of the items over the counter, others you will need to get from your veterinarian. The following are useful to have: An antibiotic ointment like Neosporin for topical infections and scratches, cortisone cream for topical allergy, an antihistamine for insect bites, and perhaps some immodium for diarrhea. Many of these items are useful for human illness and the contents of human first aid kits are useful with your pets.

If you take your computer on the trip, you can access much useful information regarding pet health issues. My website, www.manchestervet.com has an encyclopedia which contains information about a myriad of conditions which can affect the health of a traveling pet.
