

SAFE TRAVEL TIPS FOR PETS

Pet owners should use caution when flying their pets on commercial airlines, especially if they plan on checking them in as cargo. The Air Transport Association has reported that approximately 5,000 or 1 percent of the pets that are flown on commercial planes have been injured, lost, or killed during transport. In the meantime, Congress has passed a law that requires airlines to establish a separate reporting system if an animal is lost, injured, or killed and will investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident. However, animals continue to be shipped in cargo holds that are not temperature controlled. Pet owners are not recommended to fly their animal unless they can be brought in the cabin. If you plan to transport your pet on a commercial airline via cargo, the following safety guidelines are recommended.

- ◆ Make an appointment with your pet's veterinarian for a checkup and make sure all vaccinations are up to date. Obtain a health certificate from your veterinarian within 10 days of departure.
- ◆ Make sure your pet is wearing a collar and an identification tag. Breakaway collars are best for cats. The collar should also include destination information in case your pet escapes.
- ◆ Book a direct flight whenever possible. This will decrease the likelihood of your pet being left on the tarmac during extreme weather conditions or mishandling by baggage personnel.
- ◆ Purchase a USDA-approved shipping crate that is large enough for your pet to stand, sit, and change position comfortably. Shipping crates can be purchased from many pet supply stores and airlines.

◆ Line the crate bottom with some type of bedding – shredded paper or towels to absorb accidents.

◆ Write the words "Live Animal" in letters at least one inch tall on the top of the crate and on at least one side. Use arrows to prominently show the upright position of the crate.

◆ On the top of the crate, write the name, address and telephone number of your pet's destination point, whether you are traveling with them or someone else is picking up the animal.

◆ Affix a photograph of your pet to the top of the crate for identification purposes if the animal should escape from the carrier. Also carry a photograph of your pet.

◆ Freeze water provided for your pet so that it will not spill during loading, and will melt by the time your pet is thirsty. Tape a small pouch (preferably made of cloth) of dried food outside the crate. This enables airline personnel to feed your pet in case it gets hungry on long-distance flights or layovers.

◆ Do not lock the door of the crate. Make sure it is securely closed, but not locked, so that airline personnel can open it in case of an emergency.

◆ Tell every airline employee you encounter that you are traveling with a pet in the cargo hold so that any additional considerations or attention can be provided. If the plane is delayed, or you have any concerns about the welfare of your pet, ask the airline personnel to check your pet when feasible.

◆ Tranquilizing your pet is not generally recommended as it could hamper their breathing. Check with your veterinarian first.

If you are planning a road trip, driving with your pet will involve more than putting the animal in the car and driving off, especially if you are driving long distances or will be away for a long time. The following tips can help you prepare for a safe and smooth car trip.

◆ Acclimate your pet for a long trip by taking him or her on a series of short drives first, gradually lengthening time spent in the car.

◆ Start your pet on a travel-feeding schedule with a light meal two to three hours prior to departure. Never feed your pet in a moving vehicle.

◆ In addition to travel papers, food, bowls, leashes, a waste scoop, plastic bags, grooming supplies, medication and a pet first aid kit, pack a favorite toy or pillow to give your pet a sense of familiarity.

◆ Make sure your dog has a flat (never a choke) collar with an ID tag imprinted with home address, as well as a temporary travel tag with your cell phone and a destination phone number (and any other relevant contact information).

◆ Harness, rather than leash, your dog inside the car. For smaller animals, a well-ventilated crate is recommended.

◆ Don't allow pets to ride with their heads outside the window as it subjects them to flying objects, inner ear damage, and lung infections.

◆ If you travel frequently with your pet, consider cargo-area pet barriers, waterproof seat covers or rubberized floor liners sold by auto product retailers.

Source: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals



PET TALK

Volume 07, Number 04

American College of Veterinary Pharmacists

HOT WEATHER TIPS

The summer months bring long, hot days. Dogs and cats can suffer from the same problems that humans do—overheating, dehydration and even sunburn—when the mercury rises. By taking these simple precautions, you can protect your pet from the elements, and have fun all summer long!

- ◆ Never leave your pet alone in a vehicle. Even with the windows open, a parked car, truck or van can quickly become a furnace on a hot day—and overheating (heat prostration) can kill an animal. Parking in the shade offers little protection, as the sun shifts during the day.

- ◆ Always carry a gallon of cold water for your pet.

- ◆ Don't force your animal to exercise after a meal in hot, humid weather. Exercise in the early morning or the evening, and keep walks to a minimum.

- ◆ Never leave your dog standing on hot asphalt. Your dog's body can heat up quickly and his or her sensitive paw pads can burn.

- ◆ Do not take an animal to the beach unless you can provide a shaded spot and plenty of fresh water to drink. Rinse him or her off after being in the salt water.

- ◆ It's smart to provide plenty of shade and a well-constructed doghouse for animals staying outside. Bring your dog inside during the hottest part of the day, and make sure your dog has plenty of cool water. Keep cats indoors.

- ◆ Be extra sensitive to old and overweight animals in hot weather. Snub-nosed dogs such as bulldogs, pugs, Boston terriers, Lhasa apsos and shih tzus, as well as those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.

- ◆ Avoid walking your dog in areas that you suspect have been sprayed with insecticides or other chemicals. Be alert for coolant or other automotive fluid leaking from your vehicle. Animals are attracted to the sweet taste, and ingesting just a small amount can be fatal. Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 4ANI-HELP if you suspect that your animal has been poisoned.

- ◆ Bring your animal to the veterinarian for a spring or early summer check-up—including a test for heartworm, if your dog isn't on year-round preventative medication. Ask your doctor to recommend a safe pest-control program to combat fleas and ticks.

- ◆ Keep your animal well-groomed to stave off summer skin problems. Shaving a heavy-coated dog's hair to a one-inch length helps prevent overheating. Don't shave the hair down to the skin, however, or you will rob your dog of protection from the sun. Cats should be brushed often.

- ◆ To prevent escape and accidental falls, make sure all windows in your home are properly screened.

Source: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

This Newsletter is provided to you by:

*Thomas E. Silvonek, RPh
Dorneyville Pharmacy
3330 Hamilton Boulevard
Allentown PA 18103
Phone: 610-437-4600
Fax: 610-437-1444*