



DCAH Newsletter

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Traveling With Your Pet

Traveling with your pet—whether short or long distances—requires forethought and planning. *The best thing you can do prior to traveling with an animal is to see your veterinarian.* She can decide whether your pet will be able to withstand the strain of a car trip and what kinds of precautions you will need to take before heading off into the great blue yonder. An unhappy pet makes for a miserable trip, and an unsafe pet may bring heartbreak.

Don't be a Dummy

We've all seen the dummies on television. They crash into walls, lose limbs, and generally convince you that wearing seat belts saves lives. Did you ever think this might apply to your pet as well?

Riding unrestrained in a car or truck is as dangerous for your pet as it is for you. Think about it: your four-legged friend has far less ability to keep himself upright in a careening vehicle than you do. In an accident, Rover is likely to go straight through the windshield, and the chances of him surviving impact upon landing are slim.

"But my dog loves to hang his head out the window!" you say. "Am I supposed to deprive him?" Yes, you should. As you're traveling on the highway and Rover happily is taking in the breeze, he is at the mercy of flying rocks, debris, and branches that can easily put out an eye or otherwise cause permanent damage to his head. Save headache and heartache for both of you and buy a restraint for your pet.

Riding Shotgun

They make several types of seat belts for animals, and most are

available at your local pet supply store. Wholesale pet supply companies might also have what you're looking for, and you don't have to be a veterinarian or a pet shop owner to use them. Seat belts for your dog are available in several sizes, and they work with a harness piece that goes over the chest and attaches to the car's seat belt. The dog can sit and see the scenery or lie down for the duration of the trip.

Car seats for smaller pets (up to ten pounds) are available, though not many people have heard of them. It looks somewhat like a square cloth bucket attached to the back of your vehicle's seat and can be raised or lowered to allow your pet to see out the window. The seat contains a safety harness, and it retails for about \$50.

No Carrot Cake for Rover

Another option for restraining a cat or dog inside a vehicle is a carrier, which has the added bonus of portability. These sturdy, well-ventilated carriers can be a comfort zone for your pet if you get him used to it by taking him on short, frequent trips at first. And in a carrier, he can't (out of sheer boredom) eat the carrot cake you've left on the dash or otherwise destroy the interior of the Chevy. When choosing a carrier, keep in mind that it should:

- Allow your pet to sit, stand, or lie down comfortably
- Have no interior protrusions that may injure the animal



- Be well-ventilated, with exterior rims to keep other objects from blocking airflow
- Be equipped with handles or grips for secure transport

You may want to include a few familiar toys or a favorite blanket to lie on. Carriers, in general, cost between \$50 and \$150 (depending on size), and can be found at just about any pet store. Smaller carriers can usually be secured to the seat using the car's seat belt.

Leaving an animal inside the car requires attention to temperature: if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your four-legged pal. And the temperature in the interior of a car can be lethal—even in winter—with temperatures rising extremely quickly to between 150 and 200 degrees. And if you're on a long car trip, you must stop every two hours for Rover's roaming pleasure. He is just as cramped in the car as you are, and a quick walk will do both of you some good. When you do stop, be sure to give your pet water—he gets just as thirsty as you do.

Once You're There

The car ride ends, but the trip may have just begun. Once you arrive at your destination, you'll need to find lodging. Pet-friendly hotels and motels do exist, though you may

Have a Heart Fund

We currently have three cats, four dogs, seven kittens, and a rabbit who have benefited from your thoughtful donations. Our thanks to the following Have a Heart Fund contributors during this period:

Virginia Wade	Tess Tompas	Gary Hinrichs (in memory of Velcro)
Patricia Lattimore	Carolyn Carpenter	Granny's Treasures (in memory of Sally)
Patricia Boger	Sandra Newsom	Barbara and David Pasternak (in
Bobbie and Kathy Williams	John and Geri Hoessle (in memory of Jenni)	memory of Levi) 🐾
Girl Scout Troop 1686	Joann Hughes (in memory of Cujo)	

Airbags and Your Pet

Warnings about the hazards of car airbags for children are often in the news. But did you know that airbags can be equally hazardous to pets riding in the front seat? Normally children under 12 can not safely ride in the front seats of cars with airbags. Therefore, pets of equivalent or smaller size should also travel in your back seat. Cats should always travel in carriers for their own safety (and yours), as well as to prevent a quick escape from the car. 🐾

Sedation and Traveling Pets

Do traveling pets need sedatives or tranquilizers? The answer from the American Humane Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association is "No." Sedated animals can have equilibrium problems that may result in injury. During air travel, the increased air pressure can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems for sedated pet, especially cats and brachycephalic (or flat-faced) dogs. However, if you feel that there are special circumstances that require the sedation of your pet, check with one of our veterinarians. 🐾

Air Travel Requirements

Did you know that your pet may need a **health certificate** to travel by air? Most airlines require them, even on domestic flights. Be sure to check with your airline (and any connecting airline) for its requirements. At the same time, confirm the type of pet carrier that it accepts. If traveling to foreign countries, be sure to check with their embassies to determine any entry requirements for your pets (Some are quite stringent.). Our animal hospital has the necessary forms for both domestic and international health certificates. 🐾

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have to do a little searching to find them. (See "Finding Pet-Friendly Lodging," below.) Some questions to consider before you make reservations:

- Will other pets be staying there at the same time? If so, what kinds of animals?
- Will there be fees or deposits for my pet? Are the fees per pet or per room? Daily or one-time only? Is the deposit refundable?
- Will I be limited to a certain type of room?
- Are there restrictions on where I can walk my pet?
- Do they offer special services for pets? (Some five-star hotels may.)

Expecting the Unexpected

Despite all of your forethought and planning, from time to time medical emergencies with your pet *will* occur. Before you leave, ask your veterinarian for a referral to a veterinary hospital in your destination location. You can also visit www.healthypet.com and use the AAHA Hospital Locator, which can search for AAHA member facilities by zip code.

With a little preparation and forethought, traveling with your pet in the car can be a safe and enjoyable experience for both of you. 🐾

Finding Pet-Friendly Lodging

The American Automobile Association (AAA) and American Express Travel Service can help you make arrangements at motels and hotels accepting pets. Their numbers can be found in your local directory. Or telephone 800/496-2665 for *Vacationing With Your Pet!*, a national listing of pet-friendly hotels and motels.

Excerpted from an article by Kristin Stark, AAHA Assistant Editor