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Travelling with your pet – what you need to know

THE INFORMATION BELOW IS CORRECT FOR TRAVEL BEFORE 29TH MARCH 2019. AFTER BREXIT THE PET TRAVEL RULES MAY CHANGE. IF YOU PLAN TO TAKE YOUR PET ABROAD AFTER BREXIT PLEASE CONTACT US FOR UP TO DATE ADVICE.

Can my pet travel abroad?

Yes! Prior to 2000, any pets who arrived in the UK from another country had to endure 6 months in quarantine. However, since PETS (the Pet Travel Scheme) started, animals have been able to travel with a pet passport and enter Britain with no quarantine period at all. Only certain countries are involved in PETS, so should an animal be brought to Britain from a country not involved in PETS, quarantine still applies. Luckily there are many countries involved in PETS – this includes most EU countries and many outside the EU including Canada, USA, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and many more (we can give you a full list). The following information in this handout applies to dogs and cats. It is also possible to travel with ferrets, rabbits and rodents under PETS. The rules are a little different, but we can discuss these with you.

What's the point of PETS?

The rules and regulations governing pet travel are a bit bureaucratic and onerous, although there is a good reason why we have them. They are designed to protect Britain from infectious diseases that our pets could bring back with them from abroad. The main disease we are worried about is Rabies. Britain, unlike most other countries, is currently free of Rabies and it is really important that it stays that way. There are other diseases that are prevalent abroad that we could do without here, most notably those transmitted by ticks and a type of tapeworm that can infect people. So Britain has rules in place to prevent these diseases being carried home by our pets.

How do I get a pet passport?

We can help you through the whole process and give you a pet passport right here at Hope Vets. If you are planning to travel under PETS you must start the following procedure at least 3 weeks before your planned departure, so you need to plan a little in advance.

STEP 1: MICROCHIP IMPLANTATION

This is the permanent, unalterable method of identification that we use for your pet.

STEP 2: RABIES VACCINATION

This vaccine protects your pet against Rabies which they could be exposed to abroad.

STEP 3: PAPERWORK

Only an OV (Official Veterinarian) can issue a pet passport, but as luck would have it our very own vets, Stephanie and Poppy, are both OVs and so we can sort you out with all the paperwork you will need for travel.

STEP 4: WAIT 3 WEEKS

Your pet cannot travel for the 21 days after the Rabies vaccination was administered.

STEP 5: RABIES BOOSTERS

It is important, if you are travelling regularly, to keep your pet passport up to date. This means getting your rabies booster done on or before the 'valid until' date written in your passport. If your Rabies booster is even a day late your passport will be invalid and you will have to start again from STEP 2 – including the 21 day wait between vaccination and travel. If you are not travelling regularly then you can let your passport lapse and just do your next rabies booster at least 21 days before you next intend to travel. The vaccination interval for Rabies is usually 3 years in the UK but can vary according to which vaccine brand is used and what country you are going to and for how long. We will discuss this with you. Should you be staying abroad for a prolonged period your Rabies booster may need to be done whilst you are away by a certified vet.

What about the travelling?

These days travelling abroad with pets is a normal thing to do and travel companies, ports, airports, Channel Tunnel and the Eurostar are well used to catering for our pets. Leaving Britain tends to be very straightforward. Just be sure to plan for plenty of breaks during the journey for your pet.

Returning to Britain is a little more complicated. Not only do you need your valid pet passport, with your pet's up to date rabies vaccinations signed and stamped in it but you also need to plan to visit an authorised vet prior to leaving for Britain. The reason for this is to get rid of any tapeworms your pet may be hiding and make sure they are dead by the time your happy parasite-free pet disembarks in Britain. The timing for this treatment is **CRITICAL –your pet must be treated for tapeworms no less than 24 hours and no more the 120 hours (5 days) before being checked in for the return journey to Britain.** The vet administering the treatment has to sign with the date and time in your passport to confirm the treatment has been given. If you are only going away for a short time, for instance a weekend, you still need to get the tapeworm treatment administered by an authorised vet in the correct window (24-120 hours before check in for the return journey). Sometimes this means getting it done here with us before you leave for your short break away.

Is that all there is to it?

NO!

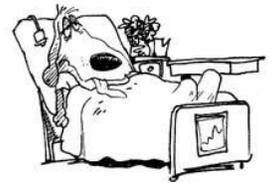
Taking pets abroad is a great thing to do, as us Brits can't bear to be parted from our animals, even for a holiday. But you do need to be aware of some of the dangers. Taking a British pet into a foreign country exposes them to a number of different diseases and parasites which they have never encountered before. This makes our animals very vulnerable. As you know from every hot place you have ever been to, there are many more biting insects around. These biting insects can transmit a whole host of infections which can be very serious. Whilst your pet is abroad it is important to protect them against sandflies, mosquitoes and ticks. We will tailor a parasite protection plan for your journey to keep your pet safe.

What diseases should I be worried about?

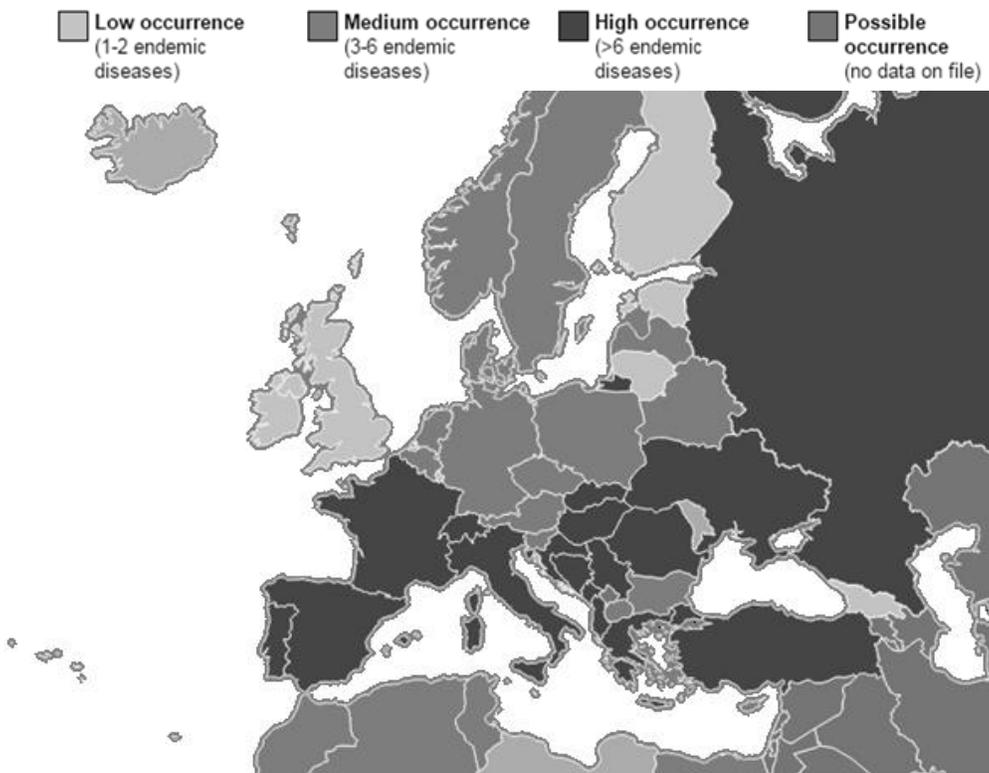
- **Leptospirosis** (Weil's disease) is a bacterial disease that dogs most commonly contract by coming into contact with rodent urine. It can be fatal, but vaccination dramatically reduces the risk of contracting disease. There are different strains of leptospirosis, and while the core vaccination protocol for most UK dogs protect against the most common strains found locally, there are additional strains that commonly cause disease in Europe. We recommend dogs travelling to Europe are vaccinated with the L4 vaccine annually (this may require a course of 2 vaccines the first year if your dog has previously been vaccinated with the L2 vaccine).
- **Heartworm (dirofilariasis)** is a disease primarily of dogs, although cats are still at risk. It is transmitted by mosquitoes and is common in southern Europe, the USA and many tropical countries. After infection, the larval worms develop in the heart and the blood supply to the lungs causing significant disease and if not treated this infection can be fatal. We can prevent heartworm infection using ADVOCATE or PRINOVOX every month. We recommend starting treatment 1 month before travel and continuing for 1 month after returning to Britain.
- **Babesiosis** is a disease transmitted by ticks. When the tick feeds, saliva is injected into the host (your pet) with babesia organisms which invade and multiply in the red blood cells. A tick biting an infected animal will become infected itself, and go onto to bite another dog. Infected animals develop fever, anaemia, weakness, lethargy, bloody urine, anorexia and

weight loss. This severe disease can be fatal. We recommend using products such as ADVANTIX or SERESTO to repel ticks and kill them if they do bite your dog. In addition it is worth checking your dog every day and removing any ticks you find. We can teach you how to safely remove ticks.

- **Leishmaniasis** is a disease transmitted by sandflies. It occurs commonly throughout the tropics and especially the Mediterranean coastal area of southern Europe. The disease is caused by a protozoon, which is taken in by the sandfly when it feeds on an infected dog. Most common symptoms include dermatitis and skin infection, weight loss and eye, liver and kidney disease. The disease, if left untreated is fatal. Sandflies are only a problem in particular areas, therefore local knowledge is useful before visiting an area. Sandflies mostly feed at dusk and are more active in the summer. Should you be travelling to a sandfly area we recommend ADVANTIX which repels sandflies and mosquitoes. In really bad areas you can use a SCALIBOR collar which is very effective. It is sensible to keep your pet inside from sunset to sunrise. There is also a new vaccine that can protect your pet against leishmania, this is a really good idea if you are travelling to effected areas.
- **Ehrlichiosis** is transmitted by ticks. This disease is widely spread throughout the world. Symptoms of this disease vary widely and include depression, fever, swollen glands and haemorrhages under the skin and elsewhere. Chronic infections may lead to chronic debility, weight loss, arthritis and neurological disease including convulsions. See Babesiosis above for tick control measures.
- **Hepatozoonosis** a widespread disease of both dogs and cats in warmer climates, this is caused by a protozoan parasite carried by bloodsucking insects, mites or most commonly, a tick. Symptoms include weight loss, fever, lethargy, anaemia, pain, lameness, paralysis and secondary liver, lung and kidney disease. See above for control of ticks and biting insects.



How do I know what diseases are prevalent in my destination?



This map gives some indication of the incidence of disease across Europe, with the UK having between 1-2 diseases occurring, Scandinavia and Northern Europe with 3-6 prevalent diseases, and Southern Europe with a high occurrence of 6 or more diseases common. This map can also be found on the Bayer website - www.cvbd.org

What next?

We will help you through the whole process, not only with the paperwork but also making sure your pet doesn't contract any nasties abroad. Just make an appointment and we can get started!

Where can I find useful information?

Here's a good start...

- www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm - This is the official PETS information from the government. They also have a helpline if you prefer a telephone to a computer (0870 241 1710).
- www.defra.gov.uk – most up to date government information.
- www.airpets.com – Animal flight company
- www.petseurotravel.co.uk – traveling with pets by Eurotunnel.
- www.seafrance.com/pets - Traveling to France by Ferry
- www.cvbd.org – interactive map on pet diseases in the world