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Travelling with your pet – what you need to know

UPDATED JANUARY 2021

Can my pet travel abroad?

Yes even after Brexit pets can travel to Europe (it's just a bit more paperwork). Prior to 2000, there was quarantine for pets arriving in the UK then the Pet Travel Scheme gave our pets the little blue passports and reasonably free travel all over Europe. Since Brexit you can still take your pet to Europe with you but the rules have changed. Travel to countries outside Europe is also possible but specific advice for that country should be sought for up to date rules. The following information in this handout applies to dogs and cats. It is also possible to travel with ferrets, rabbits and rodents but the rules are a little different and should be checked.

What's the point of all the rules around pet travel?

The rules and regulations governing pet travel are very 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 one transmitted by a 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 my pet ready to travel?

We can help you through the whole process and give you a pet you documentation right here at Hope Vets. If you are planning to travel to Europe or Northern Ireland with your pet you must start the following procedure a minimum of 3 weeks before your planned departure but it is sensible to give yourself a bit more time.

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: WAIT 3 WEEKS

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

STEP 4: ANIMAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE (AHC)

The AHC is your travel documentation. It must be issued by an OV (Official Veterinarian), but as luck would have it our very own vets, Steph, Poppy and Sara are all OVs and so we can sort you out with all the paperwork you will need for travel. The AHC can only be issued within 10 days of your departure date and then is only valid for ONE entry into Europe. The AHC is valid for ongoing travel within Europe and ONE re-entry into the UK for just FOUR MONTHS from the date of issue.

STEP 5: RABIES BOOSTERS

Rabies boosters are due every 3 years (depending on the brand of vaccine used) and can be done on or before the due date if you don't want to have another 21 day wait to be able to travel. If you are only travelling infrequently it is not a big deal if your rabies vaccination is overdue, just remember you will not be able to take your pet to Europe until at least 21 days after the vaccination is given.

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. There may be a bit of confusion while everyone gets used to the new paperwork but pets cross back and forth to Europe so commonly that I doubt there will be much difficulty.

Bringing your pet home should be equally straight forward but you must make sure you re-enter Britain within 4 months of the AHC being issued and that your pet's rabies vaccination is still valid. You also need to plan to visit an authorised vet prior to leaving Europe. 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 your paperwork with the date and time to confirm the treatment has been given. Tapeworm treatment is not required for re-entry to the UK from Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Finland, Norway or Malta.

Is that all there is to it?

NO!

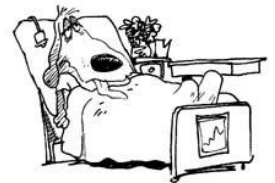
Taking pets abroad is a great thing to do, as us Brits can't bear to be parted from our animals, even for a holiday. But you do need to be aware of some of the dangers. Taking a British pet into a foreign country exposes them to a number of different diseases and parasites which they have never encountered 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. You even need to consider sunburn, just the same as Brits are well known for the lobster pink look, our pets can burn too. If you have white or light hair on your pet or areas of exposed pink skin you need to protect these areas with a high factor sunblock designed for dogs and cats.

What diseases should I be worried about?

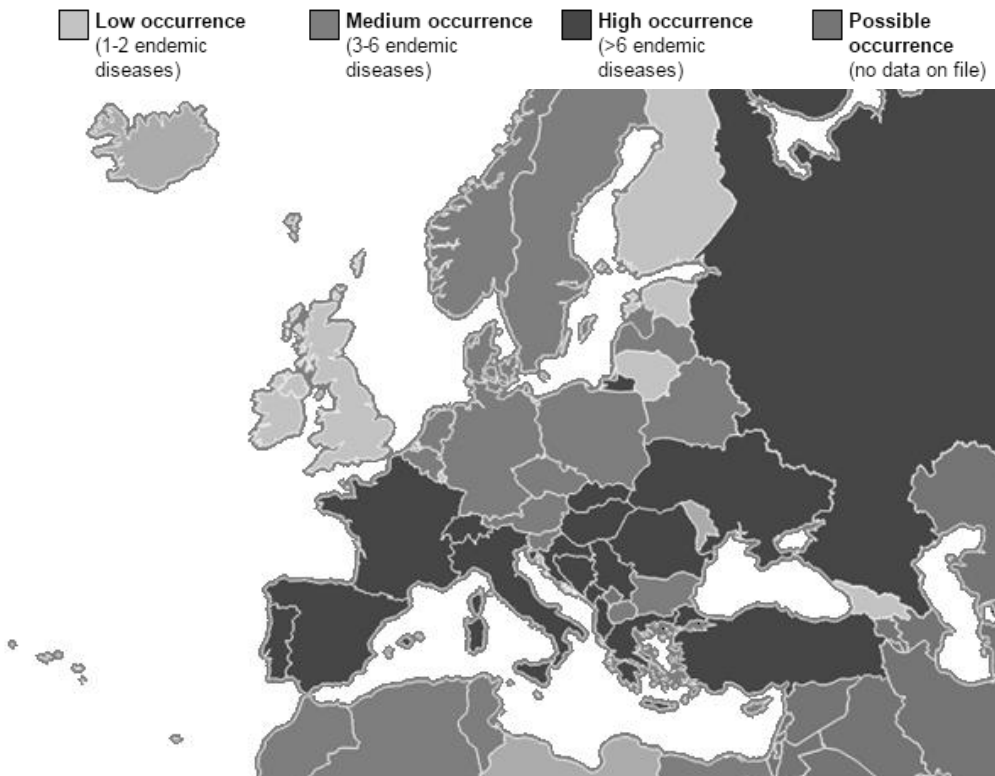
- **Leptospirosis** (Weil's disease) is a bacterial disease that dogs most commonly contract by coming into contact with rodent urine. It can be fatal, but vaccination dramatically reduces the risk of contracting disease. There are different strains of leptospirosis, and while the core vaccination protocol for most UK dogs protects 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 NEXGARD SPECTRA or PRINOVAX 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. Alternatively NEXGARD SPECTRA will kill all ticks that attach within 24 hours.

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. We recommend contacting us at least a month or 2 before you plan to leave and we can give you up to date advice and work out a parasite prevention plan depending on where you are travelling to and what time of year. Then we have to do the epic paperwork appointment within 10 days of your departure date. Please bring your microchip certificate and if you have them any old vaccination documentation and your old pet passport to this appointment.

Where can I find useful information?

Here's a good start...

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-and-from-great-britain> - This is the most reliable and up to date source of information. Please double check with the gov.uk website to make sure no rules have changed and that you are following the best advice for your individual circumstances.
- www.cvbd.org – interactive map on pet diseases in the world

While we are happy to do what we can to assist you in understanding the regulations, compliance with them rests with you, the client. Therefore please read all government sources of information carefully to gain a complete understanding of how the regulations relate to your own particular circumstances.