

TIPS FOR SAFE TRAVEL WITH YOUR DOG

Thinking of traveling with your dog? No matter how you are getting to your destination, help ensure a safe and pleasant journey with these precautions.



BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Check in with your vet ▶ If your vet notices something off with your pet, you can not only receive advice on whether travel is recommended, but also have up-to-date medical information should your dog accompany you on your travels. Always take your pet's veterinary records with you, should you need to visit a vet while away.

Bring ID ▶ Affix a durable pet ID tag with easy-to-read contact information to your pet's collar. A tag will be the first thing someone will look for if they find your pet. You can also have your dog microchipped for a second, permanent form of ID that can be scanned to provide your contact information.

Pack a supply of your dog's usual food with you ▶ A vacation is not the time to change up their diet! Find out where your pet's food is sold at your final destination so you have an option to purchase more, if needed.

TRAVEL BASICS

Keep your dog confined ▶ No matter what your mode of transportation, the single best practice to keep your dog safe is to restrict them to a kennel, carrier, or on leash if out and about.

Carry recent photos of your dog ▶ A recent photo will help identify your pet in case they get lost.

Consult with your veterinarian about appropriate medicines or natural sedatives ▶ Your vet can best advise you about safe and appropriate medicines for your specific mode of transportation, especially if your dog is predisposed to anxiety or motion sickness.

Feed your dog before traveling ▶ Give your pet their usual meal one to two hours before travel (or two to four hours before if they are prone to motion sickness), and bring along familiar toys, chew items, or a favorite blanket for comfort.

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CARS AND TRUCKS

Your dog should be restrained for a car journey of any length ▶ An unrestrained dog can become a projectile during a sudden stop, and road debris can cause serious injury if your dog rides with its head out the window. Secure your dog in the back seat and use a pet travel safety harness, car seat, or a carrier fastened by a seatbelt. Use a crate or carrier properly secured to the truck bed if traveling by pickup.

Exercise helps relieve stress ▶ Schedule time before you leave and after you arrive at your destination. Take breaks for potty and play along the way (about every four hours) and be sure to use a leash, as even the most obedient of pets can become disoriented during travel and react unusually. Last, be mindful of temperature – extreme hot or cold in a car is just as harmful for dogs as it is for humans.

PLANES AND TRAINS

Buy an airline or train line-approved carrier ▶ Your dog will need one whether they join you in the cabin or travel in the cargo hold. Check the airline or train line website for requirements. Carriers may also require health or immunization records or other information.

Book direct flights ▶ It is easier to avoid mix-ups during transfers or possible delays in getting your pet off the plane. Ask the airline if you can watch your pet being loaded and unloaded from the cargo hold.

Open the carrier as soon as you are in a safe place at your destination ▶ Clip a leash on your dog so you can safely examine them. See a veterinarian immediately if you notice anything wrong.

HOTELS

Not every hotel is pet-friendly, so be sure to research pro-pet chains in advance ▶ Best Western, DoubleTree, Choice Hotels, Marriott, Four Seasons, and more allow dogs. There may be charges, extra fees, or deposits if your pet will be joining you for a stay.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Let your dog explore ▶ Show them their new accommodations and where they can find their food and water. Be sure to take them for a walk around where you are staying to familiarize them with their surroundings.

Check your pet-friendly hotel's policy on leaving your pet alone in the hotel room ▶ Some may specify that this is not allowed, and you will be held responsible for any damages to the room caused by your dog.

MOTION SICKNESS VS. STRESS

Be alert for signs of motion sickness ▶ These can include human-like symptoms, such as vomiting and dry heaving, as well as more dog-oriented ones, like excessive lip-licking, panting, shaking, and inactivity. Some puppies may not have the fully developed ear structures that help them balance, which can lead to early bouts of motion sickness they often outgrow.

These can also be signs of something we humans feel too: stress ▶ Dogs of any age may associate car rides with traumatic events – maybe they were abandoned at a shelter or remember being sick in the car as a pup. This association between cars and trauma can lead to lingering anxiety that needs to be addressed.

Conditional training is the most effective way to address the anxiety at the root of most canine car concerns ▶ Start small, spending even a few minutes at a time in the car with the engine turned off. Use stress-free activities like feeding, chewing on a favorite bone, or brushing (if this is relaxing for your dog) to build up positive associations.

Progress from sitting in the unmoving car to sitting in the car with the ignition turned on ▶ Next, take short trips around the block, to your dog's favorite pet park, or to another destination with your pet enjoys. You can eventually introduce longer distances and unfamiliar places.

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