



Acton Animal Hospital
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Pet Care News

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Tips for Traveling with Your Pet



Traveling with your pet can be a positive and fun experience for both the pet owner and the pet, however it takes a little thoughtful preparation before the actual travel begins. First, consider the method of transportation to your destination.

If traveling by air, contact the airline you will be using to learn what requirements must be fulfilled or search the web site www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/sregs. Most airlines require a health certificate and a certificate of acclimation stating that the pet is healthy and has received all needed current vaccinations before he or she will be allowed to fly. Travel out of the country may require an International Health Certificate. Various countries have specific entry requirements and an airline may require certificates be validated within a specific time frame from the time of transport.

If traveling by car, think about the safety and comfort of your pet during the trip. Consider using a dog or cat crate to contain your pet in the car for its safety and for the safety of the people in the vehicle. The crate also will make a comfortable and secure place for your pet to stay when you cannot be with them during your visit away from home. If a crate is not practical to take along, consider a pet seat belt or other containment devices such as car nets, seat slings, etc. that will make travel with your pet safer. Dogs should not be allowed to ride with their heads outside the car since dirt or other debris could hit their face and result in injury to the eyes.

Discuss with your veterinarian whether your pet's general health will allow for safe travel with your pet. Also discuss whether a tranquilizer or a motion-sickness preventive medication should be administered before travel. It is not recommended to change your pet's usual diet or medications while traveling. Keeping everything as routine as possible will help decrease any extra stress your pet may experience from traveling. Be prepared for any possible emergency that might arise during your trip. Check that your pet's identification tags are updated with your current contact information. Take along copies of your pet's latest health records and the phone number of your veterinarian in case medical care is needed. Consider bringing along a basic first aid kit for treatment of any small skin scrapes or cuts that may occur. Lastly, have fun with your pet. He or she will probably be happy to be sharing some quality time with you.



The Importance of Annual Examinations

Due to the latest knowledge of the effective duration of vaccines, we are now extending the dosing intervals for many vaccines to a 2-3 year time frame. Because of the increased time between vaccinations, pet owners often neglect their pet's routine annual physical exam. Unless an illness or injury arises in the years between vaccinations, some patients are not being seen for 2-3 years. We clinicians know that during this time, disease can insidiously begin to take hold of pets, and unbeknownst to the owners, can start to take a toll on their pet's well-being.

Annual physical exams are important time for dialogue between pet owners and their veterinarian. Here at Acton Animal Hospital, we schedule 30-minute appointments to comprehensively perform examinations, to discuss findings of the exam and any needed laboratory tests, and to address any special concerns of the owner.

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In taking this thorough approach, we can make prudent and individualized adjustments to a pet's medical and/or surgical program.

Most often it is through thoughtful discussion about a pet owner's observations of their pet, that a veterinarian decides upon the need for a diagnostic work-up, dietary change, or an alteration in an existing medical protocol. Without this vital yearly interaction, significant veterinary health concerns may go undetected, and may only be later discovered when means to treat are no longer possible.

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Flea and Tick Product Safety

Over the summer many pet owners heard news reports about adverse reactions to flea and tick spot-on products, leading to alarm that these products were not safe. At Acton Animal Hospital we have not had any reports from our pet owners regarding allergic reactions or resulting medical conditions which we could attribute to properly applied flea and tick spot-on products that we carry and recommend at our office. Furthermore, we feel the risk of flea and tick parasitism to our patients far outweighs the small risk of local skin irritation at the site of application, that has only been reported in a few patients in more than 11 years of dispensing these products to our patients.

As printed in NAVC Clinician's Brief (July, 2009): "The ASPCA reports that cats are more susceptible to illness and death as a result of the **misuse** of spot-on flea and tick control products than dogs. The data, collected by the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, also indicate the overwhelming majority of animal illnesses associated with proper use of spot-on flea and tick control products are mild."

Pet Information on the Internet

With the wide availability of the internet these days, there is limitless information at the fingertips of pet owners. While there are many excellent internet sites providing reliable pet health information, be aware there are just as many internet sources that provide unreliable information that is unproven factually. Many web site and e-mail testimonials are sensational, unsubstantiated, or simply erroneous. Therefore it is important for pet owners to determine the source of information available. Consider the following whenever visiting web sites:

- What is the source of the information?
- How current is the information?
- How has the information been documented?
- Can you contact the web site with any questions?

Reliable information can be acquired from many veterinary schools (.edu), from government sites(. gov) or from your own veterinarian's web site or through direct contact with your veterinarian's practice. Be a savvy pet owner and be sure you are getting proven advice.

Reminders!

- . **Call ahead to refill any prescription medications for your pet.**
 - . **Call ahead to reorder any prescription pet foods before your pet runs out of food.**
 - . **Remember to schedule a physical exam yearly for your pet even if all vaccinations are up-to-date.**
 - . **Ticks will be back in force after a short run of cooler weather. We recommend the use of flea and tick spot-on products to control these external parasites.**
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