



# CAR TRAVEL TIPS

## Top 10 Tips for Safe Car Travel With Your Pet

For some pet parents, a trip's no fun if the four-legged members of the family can't come. But traveling can be highly stressful, both for you and your animal companions. With thoughtful preparation, you can ensure a safe and comfortable trip for everyone.

Planning a road trip? Traveling with a pet involves more than just loading the animal in the back seat and motoring off - especially if you will be driving long distances or plan to be away for a long time. The ASPCA offers the following tips to help you prepare for a safe and smooth car trip:

**1. GET TO THE VET.** Before a road trip is a good time to take your pet for a visit to the veterinarian. Beyond ensuring your pet's health, it's the only way to get a Vaccination or Health Certificate. The vet may also recommend other vaccinations, including Bordetella, Influenza and even Lyme disease, depending on where you're headed. Pets traveling to Canada, Mexico, or beyond, require more legal documentation and sometimes a quarantine period. (ask us for more details)

*Traveling across state lines?* Bring along your pet's rabies vaccination record, as some states requires this proof at certain interstate crossings. While this generally isn't a problem, it's always smart to be on the safe side.

*Is your dog the nervous sort?* Your vet may also choose to prescribe a sedative for him.

**2. TAGS AREN'T JUST FOR LUGGAGE.** Make sure your pet has a Microchip, a permanent form of identification and wears a collar with a tag imprinted with your home address, your cell phone, and any other relevant contact information.

Also carry a current photograph of your pet that can be copied, to make it easier for others to recognize and return him if he gets lost.

**3. PACK - AND PLAN - FOR YOUR PET.** What's in your pet's traveling kit? In addition to travel papers (i.e. *Vaccination Certificate or Health Certificate*), food, bowl, leash, a waste scoop, plastic bags, grooming supplies, Heartworm & Flea/Tick medication and any other current medications, pack a favorite toy or pillow to give your pet a sense of familiarity.

Most important, though, bring your pet's own food. This is not the time to get experimental with your pet's digestive tract.

If you're planning on staying at a hotel with your pet, confirm the details of your reservations in advance. Make sure the hotels are truly pet-friendly and know what their services are. You don't want any last-minute surprises, like weight limits.

**4. USE SOME RESTRAINT.** Just as humans need seatbelts, animals need some form of safety restraint when in the car. Most important is to actually *secure the carrier to the car*; otherwise it can become a projectile, injuring both your pet and the car's occupants. Keep your pets safe and secure in a

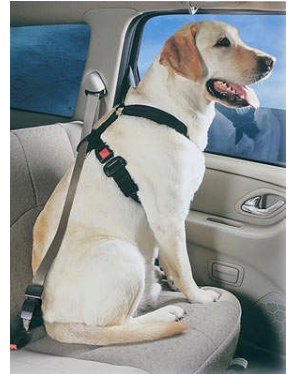


well-ventilated crate or carrier. Whatever you choose, make sure it's large enough for your pet to stand, sit, lie down and turn around in.

Before you open the car door, even for a second, make sure the leash is on him and that you have a firm grasp. If not you might find yourself chasing your dog through an unknown environment — or worse — traffic.

**6. ANIMALS GET CAR SICK, TOO.** Some people get car sick; so do some animals. If this sounds like your pet, give him a light meal a few hours before you leave and feed him minimally during the drive. Offer him small amounts of water periodically in the hours before the trip.

If your pet isn't accustomed to car travel or to a carrier, break him in gradually, well in advance of the trip, by taking short trips and using lots of praise.



**7. NO DOGGY IN THE WINDOW.** Dogs absolutely love to stick their heads out the window and smell the air as it rushes by. Though it's sad to deprive them of this enjoyment, this can subject him to inner ear damage, and many dogs are injured when road debris or insects fly into their eyes, nostrils or windpipe. They can also become ill by having cold air forced into their lungs. What's more, dogs have accidentally strangled themselves by stepping on the electric window control. So it's best to keep the dog inside.

**8. SKIP THE HOT DOG.** Your dog or other pet can't tell you if he's feeling hot or cold, so be aware of the temperature. Never leave your animal alone in a parked vehicle. On a hot day, even with the windows open, a parked automobile can become a furnace in no time, and heatstroke can develop or even death. In cold weather, a car can act as a refrigerator, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.



Bear in mind that while there are vents for the heat or A/C in the front of the car, there may not be any in the back.

**9. TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS.** A dog's legs need to be stretched just like yours do — perhaps twice as much. Your pet also needs water, exercise and potty breaks at regular intervals. Taking time for your pet may also help you to take in some interesting sights along your trip!

**10. AVOID POISON AND CHOKING HAZARDS.** Some dogs will eat *anything*. But ingesting antifreeze — even small amounts — can be fatal to cats, dogs, and birds alike. Clean up any antifreeze spills immediately.

While you snack in the front seat, avoid feeding your dog foods that are known canine toxins, such as chocolate, macadamia nuts, onions, grapes or raisins.

So, too, watch out for choking hazards in the car such as pennies, bones, socks, and small toys.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Animal Poison Control Center (888)426-4435, [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org)  
Apple Grove Veterinary Care (517)543-6101, [www.applegrovetvet.com](http://www.applegrovetvet.com)  
Travel Resources for Pets - [www.pettravelcenter.com](http://www.pettravelcenter.com)  
Pet Friendly Hotels - [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com)