Air Travel With Your Cat

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Airline travel can be difficult for your pet. If it is possible, you may want to consider having a pet sitter or boarding facility take care of your pet while you are gone. If you are going to take your pet, the following recommendations will help you arrive safely at your destination.

- Obtain a health certificate from your veterinarian. This health certificate should meet the requirements of your state or nation of destination, as well as your airline carrier. Be sure to check on the time restrictions. Certificates often need to be obtained within 10 days of the flight.
- Carry the health certificate and your pet's vaccination certificates with you.

- If taking an international flight, find out if your pet will need to be quarantined at your destination. This will influence your decision to take your pet.
- Limit the use of tranquilizers and sedatives. Only use them on the recommendation of your veterinarian. Tranquilizers and sedatives can affect the temperature regulation of the body and cause other adverse effects.
- Have your cat wear a collar, and attach a legible and accurate identification tag with complete information, the rabies vaccination tag, and a license tag. Also include a tag with a friend's address and phone number, since you will not be home to take any messages.

- Place complete identification on the outside and inside the crate.
- Use a portable kennel that meets with the USDA and airline requirements.

- Clip your pet's nails. This will prevent breakage of a nail if the pet scratches at the crate door.

- Attach a food dish and a water dish to the inside of the crate. Position them so they can be filled without opening the crate. You may want to freeze water in the water dish ahead of time so it will not spill during loading.
- Attach a container or ziplock bag of food to the outside of the crate. You may securely attach a bottle of water, as well.
- Give pets food and water within four hours of departure.
- Bring along extra food and a leash in case your flight is delayed.

- Be sure your pet is crate trained. For several weeks before the flight get your pet used to spending several hours in the crate with a comfortable pad and toys. Feed your pet inside the crate so your pet associates the crate with good things.
- Help your pet become accustomed to loud and unfamiliar noises. You may even wish to take your pet to the airport and spend some time outside there. This will help your pet become familiar with the sights and sounds.
- Make sure the crate door fastens securely, but do not use a lock on the door. You want to be sure the airline personnel can get to your pet rapidly if it becomes necessary.
- Print 'Live Animal' on the top and sides of the crate.
- Pack a first aid kit for your pet. It's always a good idea to have one handy, just in case.

- When booking your flight, notify the airlines you will be traveling with your pet. Obtain the airlines policies and requirements for traveling with your pet. Two weeks before your flight, recheck with your airline again to be sure you can meet all the requirements.
- Book on direct, non-stop flights. In the summer avoid trips during the middle of the day.
- Travel on the same flight as your pet. If there is a prolonged delay, you will be able to

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walk and feed your pet, and if necessary take the pet to a hotel with you.

- Provide plenty of exercise prior to your departure.
- After boarding, ask your flight attendant to notify the pilot that you are flying with your pet.
- If your flight is delayed, ask the airline personnel to offload your pet but not allow the pet to remain unprotected from the weather on the tarmac.

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