Flying with Your Pet - Pet Air Travel Tips (Part 1)

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Your faithful friend stays by your side most every day and night - so when it comes time to book your next family flight, why not take him along? Air travel for pets is no longer reserved just for jet-setting champions sauntering off to Westminster. And airlines have come a long way to make sure traveling pets aren't treated like "luggage with legs." But still, for some first-time pet parents, climbing into the blue unknown may take some convincing. Thankfully, with proper planning, some online research and a few phone calls, any pet owner can feel as comfortable about flying with their pet as they do flying alone.

Calming Your Concerns

If your pet is at least 8 weeks old, is comfortable in his crate for extended periods, enjoys traveling by car, and is in good health, there's little reason to worry! Industry-wide, over a million pets travel by air each year, while only a very small percentage of unfortunate injuries, losses, or fatalities are reported. If you still have concerns about flying with your pet, be aware of the most common in-flight risks, and what you can do to help prevent them:

- **Panic** - an uncomfortable pet that panics in their kennel may injure themselves. Several weeks prior to departure, let your pet get used to spending extended time in the carrier or kennel in which he will be traveling.
- **Overmedication** - tranquilizers can increase the risk of heart and respiratory problems, as well as jeopardize a pet's ability to clear his own airway if he should succumb to air sickness. Always check with your pet's veterinarian before administering any medications to your pet.
- **Undiagnosed heart or respiratory condition** leading to high altitude fatality - this is one of the conditions your veterinarian should check for during your pet's Health Certificate exam.
- **Defective kennels** - only use an airline-approved crate or carrier that is new or in perfect condition. Inspect the crate or carrier thoroughly for damage or stress cracks before travel.

Those worries aside, begin planning your pet's first flight over a month before departure, and you'll have plenty of time to make all the right decisions for safe travel. The following is an overview of what considerations you'll need to make and when, from preplanning to arrival.

Part 1 Introduction: Calming Your Concerns	Part 2 Travel Planner Countdown: 1-2 Months Prior	Part 3 Travel Planner Countdown: 10 Days Prior	Part 4 Travel Planner Countdown: Travel Day

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