

PDSA holiday health for pets

This year leading veterinary charity, PDSA, will provide more than 1.8 million free treatments to sick and injured pets.

PDSA PetAid hospitals, branches and practices also provide a range of paid-for preventive treatments including neutering, vaccinations, microchipping, prescription diets, and flea and worm treatments for the pets of eligible clients.

To find out if you qualify for PDSA veterinary care, freephone **0800 731 2502**.

For more information on PDSA and its work, visit: **www.pdsa.org.uk**

PDSA Head Office
Whitechapel Way, Priorslee,
Telford, Shropshire TF2 9PQ

www.pdsa.org.uk
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pdsa
for pets in need of vets



Check out PDSA's holiday pet video at **www.pdsa.org.uk**



Happy, safe holidays for pets

Holidays should be happy and fun-filled breaks for you and your pets. With a little preparation you can make sure everyone has a safe and wonderful time.

As the UK's leading veterinary charity, PDSA treats thousands of sick or injured pets every day. Some of these are pets whose holidays have not gone according to plan. Of course, our dedicated vets and nurses do everything they can to put these pets on the road to recovery, but with a little extra forethought many holiday accidents may be avoided altogether.

That's why PDSA has produced this essential guide to making holidays a happy and safe time for you and your pet, whether they come with you or stay at home.

Here's wishing you a relaxing and enjoyable holiday!

Elaine

Elaine Pendlebury
PDSA Senior Veterinary Surgeon



Stay at home pets

Dogs

Although a dog will always be the first into the car when it looks as if something exciting is going on, it may not be possible to take your dog on holiday with you. Many owners are fortunate to have dog-loving family and friends who know how to look after their dog and are prepared to do so. Alternatively, professional pet sitters can move into your home to take care of them.

A stay in kennels is another option. It is essential to check out the kennels before booking to make sure they are licensed, clean and that the dogs are well cared for.

Your dog will need up-to-date vaccinations to stay in kennels and your dog's vaccination record will be checked. Any dietary considerations or medical problems and treatment should be discussed with the kennels staff before you make the booking.

Ask about exercise and feeding routines and bring some familiar bedding, toys and food with you, to help your dog settle in.

Contact details

Leave contact details of your vet with the person looking after your pet and how they can get in touch with you while you're away. You'll also need to leave a letter that gives permission for the carer to take your pet to the vet and to authorise any treatment.

Cats

You may decide to ask trusted family members or friends to pop in and care for your cat overnight. For longer breaks it is best to use the security of pet sitters or a licensed cattery.

The best catteries fill up quickly, especially during the school holidays, so early booking is essential. Your cat won't be accepted into a reputable cattery unless it has up-to-date vaccinations and you'll be asked to show your cat's current vaccination record.

Visit the cattery yourself before booking to make sure you're happy with it. Look for bright clean surroundings, warm sleeping quarters and adequate exercise areas. Staff should be happy to answer your questions as well as being friendly and knowledgeable.

Ask whether you can bring along a favourite toy or familiar blanket to keep your cat company and also what diet your cat will be fed. Make sure the cattery knows about your cat's dietary needs and preferences, as well as any medical considerations.

Pet video

Check out PDSA's pet video on www.pdsa.org.uk – advising how to prepare your pet for holidays at home, including what to look for when choosing kennels or a cattery.

Small furry pets

Many owners of small furry pets, such as hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, mice and rabbits, ask a friend or neighbour to look after their pet during the holidays. Write down your pet's usual routine and food requirements, because these can be difficult for someone else to remember.

Make sure the carer has met your pet and will spend time grooming, playing with and generally fussing over them! You can leave a list of your pet's likes and dislikes, too.

Sitting pretty

Find a pet sitter through The National Association of Registered Pet sitters on 0845 230 8544 or visit www.dogsit.com



Pets on holiday

Many people wouldn't dream of going on holiday without their dogs. But there are a few things you need to consider before you set off.

Unfamiliar surroundings

Remember that your pet is on unfamiliar territory, and may easily become lost or disoriented. It is always best to keep a dog on a lead until you have both become familiar with the area.

Also, ensure that your dog has an identification tag and is microchipped.

PDSA vets microchipped nearly 16,000 pets last year but always remember to keep your contact details up to date. A dog should also wear an identification tag even if it has already been microchipped.

Hidden hazards

Wherever you are, always check for hazards that could injure your pet, including barbed wire, broken glass, poisonous plants, chemicals, busy roads or unfenced cliffs.

Accommodation

Many hotels and campsites will accept dogs, but you must check this first, and book early. They may charge extra if your dog comes with you. Some coach, rail, ferry and air travel companies will also accept dogs but require that you make special arrangements to transport them. It pays to find out about these details well in advance.

There are many pet-friendly travel companies where owners can seek advice on holidays in the UK. One such company, Dog Friendly, offers a series of books including those on dog-friendly beaches and days out. Visit: www.dogfriendly.co.uk



Beach safety

A trip to the seaside can be full of hidden hazards for your pet. Every year the papers cover stories of dogs accidentally falling from cliffs or getting swept out to sea. They can also cut their paws on broken glass, or injure themselves by fetching sticks rather than frisbees or suitably-sized balls.

Often dogs may only be allowed to walk on the beach outside the holiday season, and even then, only on a lead.

Sunburn

Like humans, pets need protection from intense sunshine. Protect the nose, ear tips and any white or hairless parts of cats or dogs with high factor pet sunblock.

Try not to exercise pets during the hottest hours of the day but instead early in the morning or in the evening. Encourage pets to seek shade and never leave a dog tied up in the sun.

Check water supplies frequently and discard any uneaten food, replenishing it with fresh supplies as required.

Bon voyage

If you are planning to take your pet overseas, this requires a great deal of planning, preparation and paperwork. It is a good idea to contact the **Pet Travel Scheme Helpline** on **0870 241 1710**. There are free factsheets available from **www.defra.gov.uk** and you currently need to contact your vet at least seven to eight months before you travel to ensure there is plenty of time for the relevant procedures to be completed.

Don't assume that your pet insurance covers accidents and illness overseas. Most pet insurance policies only cover pets while they are in the UK. Check your policy before you go!

Sun risk

To avoid sunburn and a type of cancer, protect the nose, ear tips and any white or hairless areas with pet sunblock.



Case history

Woosie had to be operated on by PDSA vets after she wolfed down 12 beach pebbles and a piece of seaweed.



Case history

An ice-lolly nearly spelt the end for Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Jazz, when he swallowed it whole. The stick lodged in his intestines and had to be surgically removed by PDSA vets.



Pets on the road

For most dogs, going on holiday means a car journey. This requires careful planning to ensure that your canine companion is safe and happy.

Safety in the car

PDSA recommends using car safety harnesses for medium-sized and large dogs, and pet carriers for small dogs. The harness fits around the dog's chest, back and shoulders, and is then attached to one of the rear safety belts.

You can find out from the car manufacturer whether the belts are suitable for holding a harness. Make sure you put your dog on his lead before you open the car doors and that he gets in and out on the pavement side.

To prevent eye injuries from stones and insects, don't let your dog put its head out of the window.

The journey

It is very important to carry plenty of drinking water and a bowl for your pet, even on short journeys. Build in frequent comfort stops, again making sure your dog is on his lead. Avoid feeding your pet just before the journey.

Travelling with pets

Should you need to transport your cat or small furry pet to and from a friend's house, the cattery or the vet, always use a secure pet carrier. It should be either wedged into the footwell and adequately ventilated or held safely with a seat belt. Never have a pet loose in the car, and only use a cardboard cat carrier in an emergency.

Never leave a dog alone in the car ... not even for a short time with the windows open.



Make holidays happy for pets

Car training for dogs

Early training is helpful to accustom your dog to the inside of a car, but older dogs can also be 'travel trained'.

Let the dog or puppy explore the car's interior in a safe environment without turning on the engine. When your dog feels comfortable, take him on a short journey, held securely in a dog seat belt. Use a pet carrier if he is too small for a safety harness.

Reward your dog at the end of this short trip with a game or savoury treat so that he associates car travel with fun. Gradually lengthen the journeys.

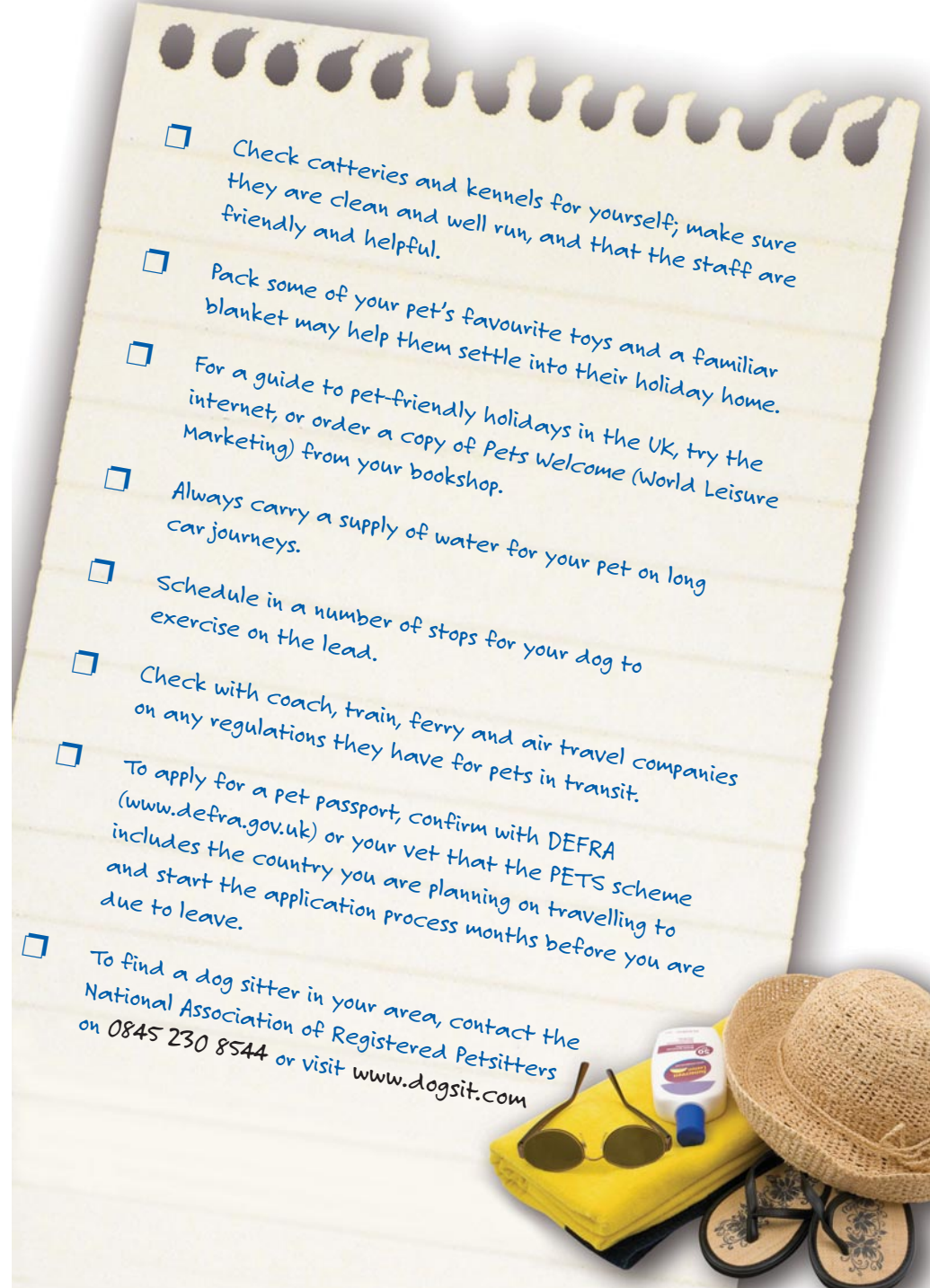
Accident prevention

Distractions while driving are a significant cause of road accidents. Children, pets and insects are the three most common causes of such distractions.

In a crash, an unrestrained pet could be seriously injured, or could injure people in the car. Even at 30mph an unrestrained Border Collie would be hurled forward with a force equivalent to the weight of a polar bear!



Holiday check-list



- Check catteries and kennels for yourself; make sure they are clean and well run, and that the staff are friendly and helpful.
- Pack some of your pet's favourite toys and a familiar blanket may help them settle into their holiday home.
- For a guide to pet-friendly holidays in the UK, try the internet, or order a copy of *Pets Welcome* (World Leisure Marketing) from your bookshop.
- Always carry a supply of water for your pet on long car journeys.
- Schedule in a number of stops for your dog to exercise on the lead.
- Check with coach, train, ferry and air travel companies on any regulations they have for pets in transit.
- To apply for a pet passport, confirm with DEFRA (www.defra.gov.uk) or your vet that the PETS scheme includes the country you are planning on travelling to and start the application process months before you are due to leave.
- To find a dog sitter in your area, contact the National Association of Registered Petsitters on 0845 230 8544 or visit www.dogsit.com