

# Crossing the **BORDER?**



**Keeping Britain's pets healthy abroad**



# 1. Planning on taking your pet abroad?

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As a nation of animal lovers, many of us enjoy sharing our holidays with our four-legged friends.

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) was introduced in 2000 allowing cats, dogs and ferrets to travel, between certain countries, without being placed in quarantine, and in 2012 the rules were relaxed further making it easier than ever for us to travel with our pets.

It's important to remember that the legislation in place is primarily to protect human health and therefore there's lots more we can do to protect our pets. When travelling with our pets they may be exposed to diseases which are not found in the UK (exotic diseases). This leaflet describes some of the main exotic disease risks that your pet may face when travelling within Europe and the steps that you can take to help reduce the risks to your pet.

**We hope you have a safe journey!**

## 2. Legislation

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With the Brexit extension, granted in April 2019, the current rules for pet travel are likely to remain in place for the summer of 2019.

This means that cats, dogs and ferrets from the UK can still travel to all EU countries and some additional countries and return to the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)\*.

In order to qualify for the Pet Travel Scheme your pet must have a permanent microchip implanted; be vaccinated for rabies (not before 12 weeks of age); and have a PETS passport signed by an Official Veterinarian confirming these conditions have been met. Following the initial rabies vaccination there is a 21-day wait period before the pet can travel. For dogs only, there is also a requirement for a veterinary-certified tapeworm treatment 24-120 hours before return to the UK.

It is important to be aware that Brexit is always subject to change - therefore, in case of a no-deal Brexit, if you are thinking of taking your pet abroad you need to plan it at least 4 months in advance. This is to ensure the health of the pet and family. Make sure you keep up to date with the most current situation by visiting:

[www.kbph.co.uk](http://www.kbph.co.uk)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit)

\* For advice on travel to countries outside the EU visit [www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad/listed-and-unlisted-countries](http://www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad/listed-and-unlisted-countries)



## 3. Preparing to go abroad

While Brexit is delayed and current travel requirements remain in place, follow our handy timeline for travel to the EU\*.

1

### At least 2 months pre-departure: visit your vet

If your pet has not been previously vaccinated against rabies<sup>†</sup> or is due a rabies booster then ensure this is done. If your pet does not have a passport then ask your vet to issue a PETS passport. If your pet does not have a microchip then this should be inserted by your vet at this point.

2

### 1 month pre-departure: visit your vet

Visit your vet to discuss vaccination against leishmania (dogs only).

3

### 1 week before travel

To ensure your pet and family are fully protected ask your vet for a parasite product that will provide protection for the duration of your stay. For travel with dogs, it's wise at this point to locate a vet nearby to the port from which you'll be returning to the UK, to provide the necessary worming treatment.

## Leave for holiday: have a safe journey!

4

### 24 – 120 hours before return to the UK

For dogs only, a veterinary-certified tapeworm treatment must be administered.

5

### Post-travel

Plan a visit to your vet to ensure your pet is thoroughly checked over. It is also advisable for dogs to receive a tapeworm treatment one month after return from abroad. This is because your dog may have been exposed to *E. multilocularis* between treatment for tapeworm and departure. This tapeworm treatment can be prescribed during this visit.

\*To ensure your pet is able to travel in the event of a no-deal Brexit please visit your vet at least 4 months before travel.

<sup>†</sup>After the first rabies vaccination you must wait 21 days prior to travel. This does not apply to boosters.

## 4. Exotic diseases

While outside of the UK our pets are at risk of exposure to diseases not commonly found in the UK (exotic diseases). Many are carried by insects such as mosquitoes and sandflies, as well as ticks. Increasingly warm climates mean that these insects and ticks can survive further north within Europe, meaning that the area in which your pet could be at risk of these diseases is increasing. To find out the main disease risks to your pet in your holiday destination, please visit our website ([www.kbph.co.uk](http://www.kbph.co.uk)).

### Main disease risks to pets travelling in Europe

#### Leishmaniasis:

Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease which affects dogs, less commonly cats, and is being seen with increasing frequency in dogs in the UK which have been abroad. It's transmitted by sandflies and is primarily found in southern Europe but now seems to be spreading north.

Common symptoms include skin lesions, wasting and signs of kidney failure such as excessive thirst and urination, and vomiting.

An important aspect of reducing the risk of your pet becoming infected with Leishmania is reducing the risk of them being bitten by sandflies. These are most active from dusk until dawn so it's advisable to keep your pet indoors during this period.

For dogs, a collar such as Scalibor Protectorband\*, will help to prevent sandflies feeding and potentially transmitting disease. Scalibor offers 5-6 months of protection against sandflies feeding, along with protection from ticks and mosquitoes. Vaccinations are also available to help to reduce the risk of your dog developing the signs of Leishmaniasis and it's a good idea to discuss this with your vet well in advance of your holiday.

**Speak to your vet about protection for your cat.**

\*Not suitable for use in cats.



**A recent study showed that 76% of dogs that had travelled within Europe were carrying ticks, showing that the risk is high and that tick protection is very important for travelling pets<sup>†</sup>.**

#### Babesiosis:

Babesiosis is a disease which is found throughout mainland Europe and transmitted by infected ticks. Symptoms include fever, weakness, lack of appetite and pale gums due to the anaemia (reduction in red blood cells) it causes. To help reduce the risk of your pet contracting this disease it's important to reduce the chance that they'll be bitten by ticks. Tick control for dogs can be in the form of a Scalibor collar and by using a product as prescribed by your vet.

Babesia less commonly affects cats but it has been reported so it's recommended that your cat is protected with tick treatment as prescribed by your vet.



## Ehrlichiosis:

Ehrlichiosis is another disease transmitted by ticks and is widespread in Europe. Common signs of infection include fever, lack of appetite, difficulty breathing, vomiting, nose bleeds and seizures. It's fatal in most cases and to reduce the risk of your pet becoming infected with this disease, tick control is the key, as described above.



## Dirofilariasis:

More commonly known as heartworm, this worm is spread by mosquitoes. Historically the disease was predominantly found in southern Europe but is now found to be spreading to the north-eastern and central European countries.

Signs of infection include exercise intolerance, coughing and breathing difficulties.

Reducing the risk of your dog becoming infected with this disease involves reducing the chance of your dog being bitten by mosquitoes. Mosquito control in dogs can be provided by the Scalibor Protectorband\* which provides 5-6 months' anti-feeding effect on adult mosquitoes. Monthly worming with a product effective against heartworm is also recommended.

Cats can also contract heartworm so appropriate worming is also essential, as recommended by your vet.

\*Not suitable for use in cats.



## Rabies:

Rabies is a viral disease, present in more than 150 countries worldwide, which can affect humans and other mammals, commonly dogs. Dogs act as a large reservoir of rabies and humans can contract the disease if bitten by an infected dog. Rabies is a fatal disease and it's a requirement that all dogs, cats and ferrets travelling and returning to the UK are vaccinated against rabies - this is something to discuss with your vet well in advance of your holiday.

## Tapeworm:

*Echinococcus multilocularis* is a species of tapeworm which is not present in the UK but is found in parts of central and eastern Europe, particularly France, Germany and Switzerland. Dogs can carry this tapeworm without showing any symptoms but it causes serious disease in humans hence the requirement to treat dogs for tapeworm 1-5 days before returning to the UK. It's also advisable to treat monthly while you're away and one month after you return to the UK.



## Leptospirosis:

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection which causes serious and potentially fatal disease. Symptoms include lethargy, increased temperature, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea and jaundice (yellowing of the gums or whites of the eyes) due to liver failure. There are multiple strains of Leptospirosis and it's important to discuss vaccination against the most relevant strains before you travel with your dog.

# 5. Travel tips

If you're travelling abroad with your pet you're likely to face a relatively long car journey and a warm climate on arrival at your destination. Here are our top tips for travelling pets:

1. **Before you set off ensure your pet is used to and settled when travelling in the car.**
2. **Ensure you have a safe space for your pet to travel in within the car, for example a crate.**
3. **It's very easy for pets to overheat in the car so good ventilation is essential. Consider buying a solar shade for the windows to shield your pet from the sun.**
4. **Plan regular rest stops on your journey.**
5. **Ensure your pet has access to fresh water at all times.**
6. **Avoid walking your dog in the heat of the day in hot climates.**
7. **Avoid your pet being outside between dusk and dawn as this is when sandflies are most active.**

# 6. Before you go

Before you travel abroad ensure that you have adequate protection in place for your pet against\*:

## Worms



## Sandflies



## Mosquitoes



## Ticks



To find a complete checklist of pre-travel requirements please visit [www.kbph.co.uk](http://www.kbph.co.uk)

\*Depends on the destination of travel

Sandfly photo: Prof Dr H Mehlhorn, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

# 7. Post-travel visit

We recommend booking an appointment with your vet for after your holiday so your pet can be checked post-travel and to ensure that your pet has had the advisable post-travel worming treatment.



## For further information visit:

kbph.co.uk  
[www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad)

1 Abdullah et al. *Parasites & Vectors* (2016) 9:391

Scalibor® Protectorband contains deltamethrin and is indicated for (i) control of infestations with ticks (*Ixodes ricinus*, *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) for 5-6 months, (ii) control of blood sucking by phlebotomine sandflies (*Phlebotomus perniciosus*) for a period of 5-6 months, and (iii) anti-feeding effect on adult mosquitoes of the species *Culex pipiens pipiens* for 6 months. Legal category: [NFA-VPS](#)

Refer to the package leaflet for information about side effects, precautions, warnings and contraindications.

Further information is available from the SPC / datasheet or Intervet UK Ltd trading as MSD Animal Health. Registered office Walton Manor, Walton, Milton Keynes MK7 7AJ. Registered in England and Wales no.946942.

**Use medicines responsibly.** For more information please refer to the Responsible Use sections of the NOAH website.

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