



The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

What is PETS?

PETS is a travel scheme set up to enable pet dogs, cats and ferrets to enter the UK from abroad without a period of quarantine. In order to qualify for the scheme, there are a number of criteria a pet must fulfil. These rules are set up to keep the United Kingdom free from rabies and a number of other 'exotic' diseases.

Are there restrictions on where you can travel?

Yes. Included in the scheme are the majority of the European Union (EU) countries, and a select number of non-EU countries. To see countries currently affiliated with the scheme, visit the government website: www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners

What you need to do if you are entering the UK from the EU and listed non-EU countries

Step 1 – Have your pet [microchipped](#) – Before any of the other procedures for pet travel are carried out, your pet must be fitted with a microchip so it can be properly identified.

Step 2 – Have your pet [vaccinated](#) – Your pet must be vaccinated against rabies and this must be done after the microchip is fitted. There is no exemption to this requirement, even if your pet has a current rabies vaccination. A single injection is required provided the animal is more than 3 months (93 days) of age. Rabies vaccinations can be given from as little as 4 weeks old - but if the first vaccination is given before 3 months (93 days) of age, a second vaccination will be required at 3 months (93 days) of age or older. From the date of the rabies vaccination (or from the second if two injections were required) **YOUR PET CANNOT TRAVEL FOR 21 DAYS**. Rabies boosters must be kept up to date. A waiting period is not required following subsequent rabies booster vaccinations, provided these boosters are kept up to date.

Step 3 – Get pet travel [documentation](#) – Having ensured your animal is microchipped and vaccinated against rabies, we will be able to provide you with an EU Pet Passport.

Step 4 – [Tapeworm treatment](#) – (dogs only): before entering the UK, all pet dogs (including assistance dogs) must be treated for tapeworm. The treatment must be administered by a vet

not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours (1-5 days) before its scheduled arrival time in the UK. There is no mandatory requirement for tick treatment. No treatment is required for dogs entering the UK from Finland, Ireland, Malta or Norway.

Step 5 – Arrange for your animal to travel with an [approved transport company on an authorised route](#) – Your pet must enter the UK from a listed country or territory travelling with an approved transport company, such as standard ferry service, on an authorised route.

What you need to do if you are entering the UK from unlisted non-EU countries or from an unlisted non-EU country via an EU or non-EU listed country

In this case you will need a Third Country Official Veterinary Certificate (available from DEFRA) and fulfil the requirements associated with this. The preparation process is more complicated and may involve blood tests.

Other points to remember

The above information details the requirements for completion of a Pet Passport for animals to re-enter the UK after travelling to the European Union or listed non EU countries. It takes no account of the importation requirements of individual member states, so do check the legislation in the country you are travelling to, or if in doubt vaccinate your pet annually against rabies.

Booster vaccinations must be given prior to the expiration date as stated in the passport. If the vaccination lapses, it can be given again but YOUR PET WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL FOR 21 DAYS following the vaccination. With the brand of vaccine currently used at our practice , the booster interval is every 3 years.

Why does my pet need special treatment against tapeworms?

To prevent the spread of disease caused by *Echinococcus Multilocularis*, a tapeworm residing in wild canids and domestic dogs and cats in various parts of the Northern Hemisphere including central Europe and Scandinavia. It has the ability to infect humans, with the resulting parasitism having potentially serious consequences.

The recent changes to the Pet Travel Scheme have removed the requirement for treatment against ticks before returning to the UK. However, ticks are responsible for spreading a number of blood borne diseases, and tick treatment is definitely recommended to ensure no viable ticks can enter the UK and propagate this spread, as well as protecting your own pet from disease. Please ask at the surgery for advice on the most effective treatment.

What about protecting my pets whilst they are abroad?

Remember that PETS exists to protect the UK from diseases being imported, rather than protection of your pet whilst it is abroad. It is therefore prudent to treat your pet for parasites to which it may be exposed whilst abroad. Note that a combination of preventative drugs may be necessary and these may require a certain interval between dosing, so sometimes you may need to medicate your pet a few weeks prior to travelling to ensure adequate protection. Please speak to one of our vets for information on which products are most suitable and when and how to administer them. Additionally, with regard to rabies, please remember that no vaccine can provide 100% protection. If your pet is bitten by another animal whilst abroad, we strongly advise that you seek immediate veterinary attention.

Who can I contact for more information?

The ultimate authority on the Pet Travel Scheme is DEFRA through the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA). The website to visit for the most up to date information is: www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners

They can be contacted on:

0870 2411710 (Pet Travel Scheme helpline)

pettravel@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk

A further extremely useful webpage to use is:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/files/pub-pet-pt35.pdf>

This is a guide for rail and air staff on the scheme, but is also useful for our purposes.

Any of our vets (nearly all of whom are approved by DEFRA to complete passports and certificates for animal exportation) would be happy to discuss the scheme with you further.

Please remember that this leaflet is for guidance only and that it is your responsibility to ensure that your pet fulfils the requirements set out by the Pet Travel Scheme. If you fail to abide by the rules, or travel to unaffiliated countries, your pet may have to complete a six month period of quarantine upon re-entry to the UK.