



## Counter-Conditioning

After you desensitize your pet to being in the crate and moving vehicles, you can then teach them to relax on cue! Ask your veterinarian about resources for relaxation exercises and teaching your pet to relax on cue.

## In-Cabin Air Plane Travel

If your pet is traveling with you on the airplane, in addition to the other recommendations, you can use your physical presence to help keep your pet relaxed. If you pat or interact with your pet, low even tones of voice and smooth, slow petting can help encourage relaxation.

## Hotels

If staying in a hotel with your pet, try to keep time away short so they are not left alone very long. Keeping them in their crate during departures will also help avoid destructive behavior causing hotel room damage, which will likely add to YOUR stress and lead to frustration with your pet. Leave a radio or television on at a soft volume to help reduce any hallway or adjacent hotel room noise that may stimulate your pet to bark.

## Health & Import/Export

Depending on where you PCS, you may need up to 4 months of advance preparation, so schedule an appointment with your veterinarian early! You will need to discuss state and country requirements, your pet's current health and vaccine status, and any labwork or special considerations for your pet's particular travel situation. Most countries require that pets are up-to-date on vaccines and have an International Organization for Standardization (ISO)-compatible microchip. The microchip is essential for a smooth travel experience but can also help ensure a more speedy reunion if your pet ever escapes or is lost.

More information is available at the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) web site: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/importexport/animal-import-and-export/travel-with-a-pet>.



<http://phc.amedd.army.mil>  
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APHC Animal Health

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Please **schedule** an **appointment** with your veterinarian to discuss any questions or concerns!



Pet Behavior

# Traveling with your pet



Planning a trip with your pet?

Your Veterinary Treatment Facility can help!



DOGS



CATS

Army Public Health Center Animal Health

## Behavior Problems

If your pet is already sensitive to strange people, situations, or other animals, use a sign on the crate to indicate “shy” or “fearful of strangers” so that airline personnel are aware and may be more sympathetic if your pet barks, growls, or hisses during the transport process.

## Medication

If your pet is already on medication, ensure that you have enough to get through the travel process plus a few extra days in case of delays. Talk to your veterinarian about gradually adjusting the schedule of medication dosing if you will be unable to keep the same schedule during travel, or if you will have a significant change in time zone.

The use of sedatives is restricted for airplane travel. They can be dangerous whenever the pet cannot be monitored. Sedatives do not relieve anxiety. They will lower your pet’s blood pressure and can reduce the ability to regulate body temperature.

If you think your pet has an anxiety issue, make an appointment with your veterinarian early so that your pet can be diagnosed and treated before your trip.

## Travel Crates

Make sure to purchase your crate in advance, checking that it meets [International Air Transport Association](#) requirements. Acclimate your pet to the new crate by leaving it out and open and by putting comfortable bedding, toys, and treats in it. You can also condition your pet to voluntarily load into the crate in a non-stressful manner (yes, even for cats!). Ask your veterinarian how. It is also helpful to put a litterbox in the crate with your cat; if the crate is too small, you can use absorbent pads over their blanket or towel. Use familiar towels or blankets in the crates so that there are familiar smells surrounding your pet.

Use of trademarked names does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Army but is intended only to assist in identification of specific products.

## Pheromones

You can use pheromone therapy to help reduce stress and anxiety during travel and the moving process. For cats, there are Feliway® diffusers, sprays, and wipes (the spray is less than 3 ounces, and wipes should be allowable through TSA. Always check first!). For dogs, there are Adaptil® collars, diffusers, sprays, and wipes. Talk to your veterinarian for more details on pheromone use and what would be best for your situation. Use of the pheromones throughout the moving process, travel, and even for a period of acclimation once you reach your destination is highly recommended. This includes any stays in hotels or at houses of friends or family.

## Desensitization

If your pet does not frequently ride in a vehicle, talk to your veterinarian about ways to introduce rides in a low-stress manner or to make rides more comfortable for an already anxious pet. Desensitization will ensure that they begin their travel as relaxed as possible. It will also help accustom them to the motions and vibrations of travel, which should help them adjust to an airplane. If your pet tends to get carsick, work with your veterinarian to determine if the cause is anxiety or true nausea. If nausea is being experienced alone or with anxiety, an anti-vomiting medication can be prescribed to reduce the discomfort. Never leave your pet alone in a vehicle for any amount of time. Offer frequent potty breaks and water, and always use a crate or seatbelt for safe and secure travel.



## Food Puzzles and Toys

Provide enrichment devices for your pet to pass the time (if your pet gets motion sickness, be aware that food and nausea are not a good mix!). There are tons of options available, and you can mix some tasty treats in with your pet’s regular kibble. Try not to introduce any new foods or treats during this transitional stage to avoid stomach upset. If your pet does not have a history of destruction or inappropriate chewing or eating, you can provide toys in the crate as well. They may not play with them, but they may decide to chew on something to help relieve stress, so it would be best if they had an appropriate item to chew on instead of their crates or themselves.