

Preparing Your Pet for a Great Boarding Experience

By now, you've reviewed our documents *Deciding on the Right Service for Your Dog* or *Boarding Facility or Pet Sitter for Your Cat?* and you have found a great option for your pet. Now it's time to decide what goes into your pet's travel bag so that their stay is comfortable, fun and stress free.

Vaccination records

You will have already determined what your kennel or pet sitter's vaccination requirements are, so be sure to provide copies of those vaccination records. It might be worthwhile to also check with your vet to see if they have any suggestions for reducing your pet's anxiety while you are away. Be sure to provide your kennel or pet sitter with those written recommendations and dosage(s) if applicable as well.

A piece of home

You might consider sending a shirt, special blanket, or toy with your pet so that they have an item to remind them of home and reduce potential anxiety.

Food and medication

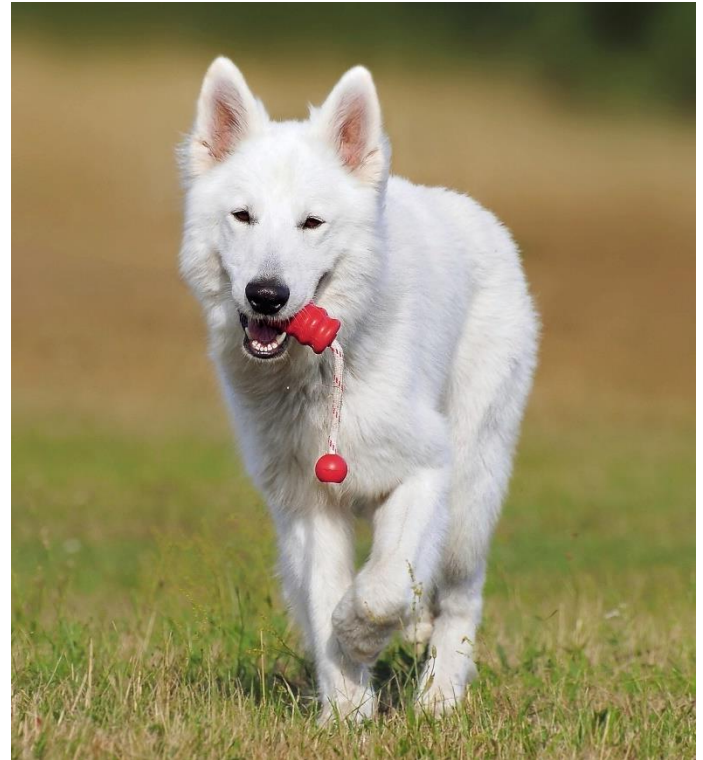
You will have to provide your own food and any medication your pet needs. Be sure food and medication is labelled clearly with your pet's first and last name and transport food in a sealed and airtight container. It is acceptable to simply write down feeding instructions and amounts and tape that to the outside of the container, but you may choose to premeasure and package the food into individual meals for your pet.

Parasite prevention

Make sure your pet is current on all of their flea and tick preventatives. Ideally, your pet has had a recent and thorough physical examination, possibly even with bloodwork. Provide these records with your vaccination records. If you will be away for an extended period, and your pet will require a monthly dose of parasite prevention while you are away, be sure to include the dose(s) with clear instructions written on the package with date of application and instructions for application.

Special instructions

Your kennel or pet sitter wants to provide your pet with the best stay possible. Don't skimp on the details or instructions. This is a member of your family, and just as you would with your child, make sure the kennel or pet sitter is fully aware of specific personality traits and potential areas for trouble. Be sure to be very clear about any food allergies or limitations and if your pet can't have regular treats, be sure to provide their allergy-free or vet-prescribed treats. Don't be shy about reminding staff about this when you drop your animal off.



Emergency contact phone numbers and your temporary phone number

Leave multiple methods for contact in case of an emergency. If you are in another country and your cell phone service will be sporadic, leave a land line number such as your hotel information where you can be contacted as well.

Emergency care instructions

Generally, your emergency contact will be your kennel or pet sitter's go to should you experience an emergency or delay while travelling, but it's a good idea to outline your wishes for your pet should something happen to you while you are away.

Municipal license and microchip numbers

Provide your kennel or your sitter with the pet license and microchip numbers assigned to your pet. For microchips, also provide the company contact information (i.e. where your pet's microchip information is stored).

Favourite toys

Most boarding facilities will have toys on hand but be sure to pack one or two of your pet's favourites to remind them of home.

Leashes/harness/jackets/booties

You will need to provide your dog's leash and harness at the minimum (and preferably one extra leash in case yours gets lost) but also remember to pack any jackets or booties or other protective equipment your dog normally wears. Note: if your dog has never worn a jacket or booties, their first stay away from home is not the right time to introduce those items as they generally take some getting used to and you don't want your dog stressed out by yet another new thing.

The facility's paperwork

If you have not submitted all of the paperwork the kennel has asked you to sign beforehand, be sure that all required documents and forms are ready to present on drop off day. This could include everything from medical records, contracts, and rule acknowledgment forms. Contact the facility in advance of drop off if you have any questions about a specific form or document.

Other special items

If your pet has a favourite dish, a slow feeder or feeder toy that they love, or special treats they love, be sure to pack them. If sending a Kong with your dog, be sure to provide the facility with their favourite Kong stuffing and directions on the amount of stuffing to give them per Kong enrichment. It's not a good idea to buy a brand new slow feeder dish just for the visit – only send a slow feeder if that is what your pet is used to eating out of.

Bed or blanket

Most kennels and facilities have their own beds and blankets for boarding pets but check with the facility to see if you can bring your animal's own bed and/or blanket. Familiar items from home can be helpful to allow your pet to settle in.

Finally, don't hesitate to ask your facility what their suggestions are. Like you, they want your pet to have the best experience possible so feel free to communicate with them to see what they suggest.

