

Leaving the Country and Need to Rehome Your Pet?

Sometimes families are in situations where they are unable to care for their pets and feel that giving up their pet is the only solution. There are however resources available to help pet owners resolve problems that may seem overwhelming.

When leaving the country, be it temporarily or permanently, you may feel that bringing your pet with you is not an option. In this case, it is important to ask what some of the reasons are you are not able to take your pet with them as there may be solutions.

Things you may be concerned about are:

- My Pet is too sick to travel
- My Pet will be too upset/scared to travel
- I don't know what is needed for the pet to move/travel with me (paperwork, vaccines, etc.)
- I am worried about the cost of travelling with my pet (airline, carrier, etc.)
- I am worried about finding veterinary care in my new location

My pet is too sick to travel

If you are concerned your pet is too sick to travel, you should consult with your veterinarian as the illness may be a treatable one. Your veterinarian can examine your pet and then discuss with you possible options for care.

My pet will be too upset/scared to travel

Moving to a new country can be very stressful for many people. You may feel that moving with your pet will be too stressful for you and especially for your pet. Keeping your pet with you, however, can help lower your stress and your pet's stress as owning a pet has many stress reduction benefits (see references for Stress Reduction Benefits from Human Animal Bond Research Institute).

Many pets haven't spent much time in crates, cars or airplanes. Planning ahead will make traveling with your pet more comfortable for you and your pet. Some tips for planning your trip include:

- Prepare your pet by slowly getting them used to their crates. It may help to spray the carrier with a pheromone spray 15 minutes before introducing it to your pet. First, place their food inside an open crate, and eventually have them eat their meals in the crate with the door shut.
- Try carrying your pet around the house in a crate or taking a short drive.
- Help your pet develop a positive association with the crate by providing treats and playtime at the end of crate time.



Your veterinarian can also help if you are worried about your pet being too upset/scared to travel as there are many options for helping to provide fear free travel including behavioural tips, natural products and if needed prescription medications. (See references below for further information regarding training tips and natural products available).

Depending upon the size of your pet and when you are traveling, many airlines will allow pets to travel in the cabin with you which may help keep your pet calm during travel. If you are traveling by air, it is best to contact the airline prior to travel.

I do not know what is needed for the pet to move/travel with me (vaccines, paperwork, etc.)

If you are uncertain about the requirements your pet needs to travel to a different country, there are resources that can help provide you with the information. Different countries have different requirements for travel with your pet. Some countries require only a rabies vaccine while others require a microchip, specific parasite prevention, and a health certificate from a veterinarian prior to travel. Timing of when the rabies vaccine, microchip and exam for the health certificate is done is also important for entry into different countries. For travel in and out of Canada with your pet, the best place to contact is Canada Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

CFIA can provide you with information regarding travel requirements for pets leaving and entering Canada. Their website is highly informative, and they can also be contacted by phone.

If you are traveling by air, it is best for them to contact the airline as they will provide information regarding how the pet will travel (in cabin versus in cargo, required size of the carrier, providing food and water, etc.)

I am worried about the cost of traveling with my pet (airline cost, carrier cost, etc.)

Unfortunately, there are often costs associated with traveling with your pet. If you have cost concerns, many airlines offer discounts or reduced costs for travel with pets at certain times of the year (see airline references below). If you do not have a carrier, perhaps family or friends have a carrier you can use. You may be able to find less expensive carriers on-line through rescues/shelters or other owners looking to sell. You may also be able to find places that donate pet supplies or offer them at a reduced cost (see references below).

I am worried about finding veterinary care in my new location

Finding a new veterinarian in a new location can be stressful, especially if your pet has a medical condition that requires on-going care. If you are moving to a place where there are friends or family, you may want to ask them who their veterinarian is prior to travel so you are not worried about finding one when they arrive. You can also ask your current veterinarian if they know veterinarians in your new location.



Finding a New Home

If you have decided that rehoming your pet is the best option, then it is important to know that despite the best efforts of shelters/rescues to care for their animals, your home is often the best place for your pet to be while trying to find an adopter. Keeping your pet in your home also reduces competition for the limited space and resources in shelters/rescues.

If you must relocate and do not have time to organize relocating your pet, you may want to ask a family member or friends to keep your pet until the travel arrangements can be made. You may also want to ask them if they would be willing to adopt your pet if your pet is unable to go with you.

As a last resort, surrender of your pet to the shelter may be an option. If this is the case, please contact us via website or phone prior to surrendering your pet to see what is involved in the process.

References:

Need to find your pet a new home, 2020 The Humane Society of the United States Privacy and Policy Terms, <https://www.humanesociety.org>

Finding a new home for your pet, 2020 Animal Humane Society, <https://www.animalhumanesociety.org>

The Human Animal Bond Research Institute, <https://habri.org/helpful-links/>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency: Animal Health Certificates, <https://www.inspection.gc.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/exports/pets/eng/1321265624789/1321281361100>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency: Traveling with a pet, <https://www.inspection.gc.ca/travelling-with-pets-food-or-plants/travelling-with-a-pet/eng/1575745860029/1575746174301>

Fear Free Happy Homes: 7 Tips to make Flights Friendly and Stress Free for Cats, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/7-tips-to-make-flights-friendly-and-stress-free-for-cats/>

Fear Free Happy Homes: How You Can Treat Your Pet to a Bon Voyage, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/how-you-can-treat-your-pet-to-a-bon-voyage/>

Fear Free Happy Homes: Teach Your Cat to go into a Carrier without a Struggle, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/teach-your-cat-to-go-into-a-carrier-without-a-struggle/>

Fear Free Happy Homes: How to Make the Carrier your Cat's New BFF, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/how-to-make-the-carrier-your-cats-new-bff/>

Fear Free Happy Homes: Keep Calm and Kennel On, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/keep-calm-and-kennel-on/>

Fear Free Happy Homes: Taking your Dog? Check With Him First, <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/taking-your-dog-check-with-him-first/>

Airlines that allow travel with your pets, www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home/plan/special-assistance/pets, www.westjet.com/en-ca/travel-info

