

## **Traveling with Pets and How to Prevent Motion Sickness** (Information excerpted from “Traveling with Pets” VeTeam Advisor June 2008)

The Travel Industry Association reports that 29.1 million Americans have traveled with a pet on a trip of 50 miles or more in the past 3 years.<sup>1</sup> One study notes that nearly 40% of U.S. dog owners state that they travel with their dogs.<sup>2</sup> There are many important aspects of pet travel that owners should know about. The following tips can be helpful when planning your trip.

### **Airline Travel**

For pets traveling by air, it will be necessary for pet owners to contact the airline well in advance in order to obtain specific regulations. Federal guidelines require pets be at least 8 weeks old and weaned at least 5 days before they can fly. Generally a veterinary issued health certificate within 10 days of flying will be necessary in addition to a valid rabies vaccination certificate. Consideration should be given as to the weather. If it is hot, flying in the evening or early morning will be best. During cold weather, flights during the day would be preferred. If possible, owners should arrange for nonstop flights and avoid plane changes. Time should be allotted for exercising the pet prior to being placed in a crate for flight. Several major airports have designated areas for walking pets. For instance, the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport has 2 dog parks at the airport – The Bone Yard and Paw Pad – that offer water fountains and buckets for pets as well as “mutt mitts” for picking up after them. Owners can contact their local airports for information.

### **Car Travel**

Car travel will require even more preparation. If owners are traveling across state lines, they will want to check out the U.S. State and Territory Animal Import Regulations Web site (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov:80/vs/sregs/>) for the latest relevant requirements. Prior to the trip, owners might want to consider having a checklist of items that will be necessary along the way and at their destination. Owners will need to plan for exercise and potty-break stops along the way. Cats are best confined to a cage or crate; dogs may be crated or fastened securely with seat belt attachments. This serves the dual purpose of keeping the owner safe (preventing pets from getting underfoot or causing distraction) as well as the pet (preventing jumping out of the car or being flung around if the car swerves or stops suddenly). If the pet has never traveled by car, the owner may want to prepare the pet by taking it along on short trips to acclimate and see how it will respond to car travel.

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<sup>1</sup> Domestic travel fast facts – Travel trends from “A to Z”. Travel Industry Association. [www.tia.org/pressmedia/domestic\\_a\\_to\\_z.html#p](http://www.tia.org/pressmedia/domestic_a_to_z.html#p), accessed 4/5/08.

<sup>2</sup> Pfizer data on file.

## Special Considerations

Anxious pet travelers will need special consideration. For pets traveling by car, very gradual acclimation (starting simply with sitting in a parked car; then driving around the block, and so on) will sometimes help. For those it does not help, medication may be considered. Travel by air is somewhat more complicated – the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Humane Association do not recommend sedating anxious pets for air travel and caution veterinarians and owners against it. Veterinarians will need to consult individual owners in these cases. Sometimes, leaving the pet home with a pet sitter or in a boarding facility is the best option for these animals. Cats, in particular, are notoriously poor travelers and are generally better off left out of travel plans, unless the owner is moving.

Another potential problem for traveling pets is motion sickness. One study cites that 17% of dogs (i.e., 7.2 million dogs in the U.S.) suffer from motion sickness as reported by owners.<sup>3</sup> When acclimation does not help, medication for these pets may be considered. Antihistamines, such as the over-the-counter drugs diphenhydramine and dimenhydrinate, have often been used in such cases but have variable efficacy and can be sedating. **Cerenia (maropitant citrate)**, a non-sedating medication for the prevention of motion sickness in dogs, has been recently approved and is an excellent alternative.

### What is Cerenia?

Cerenia is veterinary prescribed medication used for the prevention of acute vomiting and the prevention of vomiting due to motion sickness. In a field study, Cerenia demonstrated that it was **up to 93% effective in preventing vomiting due to canine motion sickness**.<sup>4</sup> Cerenia is easy to use and can be given as a **once-daily oral tablet** at home. The tablets can be loosely wrapped in peanut butter, deli slices, or spreadable cheese for up to two days in a row. If tablets are wrapped tightly, absorption may be delayed and efficacy of the drug is altered. Pfizer recommends that dogs be dosed with Cerenia two or more hours prior to traveling. Dogs should be fasted for one hour prior to dosing.

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<sup>3</sup> Pfizer data on file

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