

Travelling abroad with your pet

Precautions for dogs travelling abroad

If you are taking your dog abroad there is a risk of him/her picking up diseases which are not normally seen in the United Kingdom. The risks from a short holiday are low but there are some precautions that you should take before and during your holiday to protect your dog. Travel regulations are designed to prevent dogs from bringing rabies and tapeworms back to the UK. They are not designed to protect individual dogs whilst they are abroad.

Please read the following information regarding the common exotic diseases present in Europe. If you are travelling to the areas affected by these diseases the Acorn House team will be happy to help you select the appropriate preventative treatments prior to your trip, Please contact us at least 2 weeks prior to travel as some options are not carried as stock but need to be ordered in.

Leishmaniasis

This is common around the Mediterranean including Spain, Portugal, Southern France, Italy and Greece. This disease causes skin problems, weight loss, lameness and kidney failure. Many of the scruffy looking dogs you see on holiday, especially those with hair loss around the eyes, will have leishmaniasis. Symptoms can often be improved with treatment, but the disease is difficult to cure completely. The disease may not develop for several years after the initial infection.

Leishmaniasis is spread by sandflies. Sandflies are mostly found in wooded areas and gardens, and are particularly active at night during the summer months. Prevention is by reducing the risk of sandfly bites: do not allow your dog to sleep outdoors at night and use a preventative treatment to repel sandflies.

We recommend:

- Using a repellent treatment against sandflies – scalibor/ seresto collar or Advantix/ Vectra 3D spot on to be applied 1 week before travel (see below)
- Camping in a breezy area/ sleeping upstairs as sandflies are poor fliers
- Keeping pets indoors from dusk onwards
- Using plug in insect repellents to keep building insect free

There is a choice of repellent products which may be purchased in the UK before you travel. Two are collars (scalibor, which contains deltamethrin and lasts for 6 months; or seresto, which contains flumethrin and imidacloprid and lasts for 8months). The others are spot-on treatments (Advantix, which lasts for 2 weeks, or Vectra 3D which lasts for 4weeks).

There is also a vaccination available for dogs travelling abroad which reduces the risk of them contracting Leishmaniasis. This vaccination has not been available in the UK since 2022 so would need to be organised and administered in the EU once the pet had arrived. Protection takes 28 days to take effect, so this is only appropriate for pets that will be spending more than a month in an at-risk area.

Tapeworm

It is a requirement for pets entering the UK to be wormed with praziquantel 1-5 days prior to re-entry by a veterinary surgeon and that this is documented on the Animal health or export certificate or in an EU pet passport. This is to prevent establishment of *E. Multiocularis* in the UK a tapeworm which can infect

This is common in Australia, America, Spain, Southern France, and Italy. However, with global warming this disease is starting to occur further north, with occasional cases reported as far north as Brittany. The heartworms live in the heart and large blood vessels, causing heart failure and breathing difficulties. Symptoms are not usually seen for 6-12 months after infection.

Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes. Treatment is based around preventing mosquito bites, and also medication to prevent worms from developing if your dog is infected.

We recommend

- Prevention of mosquito bites can be achieved by using the Scalibor / Seresto collars or Advantix / Vectra 3D spot-on, as for preventing bites by sandflies.
- Prevention of heartworms developing – oral treatments given monthly (milbemax or simparic trio (also kills fleas and ticks) starting before you leave the uk and continuing for at least one treatment on your return

Because heartworm is common in the at-risk areas and is serious and difficult to treat once the worms are in the heart, we recommend that all animals travelling to risk areas are given one of these preventative drugs.

Babesiosis

A few cases of this have now been reported in one isolated region in Essex. This disease is particularly common in France but also occurs in most other European countries. Babesiosis is a parasite of the red blood cells which causes severe anaemia. This disease can have a dramatic onset with fatal consequences 2-3 weeks after exposure to the ticks which spread Babesiosis. It is essential to get an immediate diagnosis and treatment, so if your dog suddenly becomes ill whilst abroad or soon after returning, seek veterinary attention immediately.

Babesiosis is spread by ticks. In most cases the Babesia parasite is not transmitted to the dog until the tick has been feeding for 24-48 hours. Treatment is based on avoiding ticks, preventing them from biting the dog, and removing them within 24 hours if they do bite the dog.

We recommend the following:

- Avoid rough ground and forests, especially where other animals graze.
- Use a tick repellent e.g. Advantix / Vectra 3D spot-on or a collar (Seresto or Scalibor).
- Use a product which kills ticks if they do attach e.g. Advantix, Seresto, Bravecto (a tablet which kills ticks and fleas for 12 weeks after administration) or Simparica trio
- Frontline spot-on does kill ticks but it may take up to 48h which could still allow transmission of disease so we no longer recommend frontline for this purpose.
- Do a thorough groom of your dog every day and check carefully for ticks.
- Use a tick hook to remove any ticks found as soon as possible (tick hooks are very easy to use and can be purchased at reception).

Ehrlichiosis

This disease is seen in all Mediterranean countries. It often causes disease in dogs at the same time as Babesiosis because it is also transmitted by ticks. Ehrlichiosis is a parasite which infects the white blood cells. Initially it causes a fever. Following this, some dogs recover completely. Other dogs remain infected and develop problems with their immune system and blood clotting system. Prevention is by preventing tick bites as for Babesiosis.

Brucella canis

Brucella canis is an infection spread primarily by sexual activity between dogs but also if there is contact with oestrus or birthing fluids and more rarely contact with blood, saliva or urine from infected dogs. Brucella canis can also infect people. To protect veterinary staff, dogs that have travelled abroad may need to demonstrate that they are not carrying Brucella Canis prior to admission to veterinary hospitals (this is a blood test).

We recommend:

Preventing close contact between your pet and dogs abroad at all times. Acorn house policy is that unneutered travelled dogs must be tested prior to admission to the hospital for any inpatient care or procedures (they can still be examined normally in a consultation by staff wearing PPE)

Flea, tick, sandfly, mosquito heartworm and tapeworm cover combinations FOR DOGS

Recommended combinations:

Scalibor collar(apply 7 days prior to travel) repellent sandflies, ticks, mosquitos + Milpro wormer monthly (tapeworm and heartworm) continue for 1 treatment after return to uk

or

Seresto collar (apply 7 days prior to travel repellent/ acaricidal for ticks and fleas, not licensed for but believed to repel sandflies and mosquitos + milpro wormer monthly (tapeworm and heart worm)

Or

Advantix spot on (fleas, ticks sandflies mosquitos) every 2 weeks starting at least 3 days prior to travel + milpro monthly (heartworm and tapeworm)

Or

Vectra 3D spot on (fleas, ticks, sandflies, mosquitos) monthly + milpro monthly (tapeworm and heartworm) to continue for one month after return to uk

Or

Prinovox spot on monthly (heart worm prevention) fleas, seresto (fleas, ticks, sandflies, mosquitos)collar and droncit (tapeworm) – monthly to be continued 1 month after return to uk.

If already on Bravecto – can have Advantix spot on every 2 weeks and milpro wormer monthly

If already on simparica trio (fleas, ticks, heart worm) – can have Advantix (sand fly and mosquito) spot on every 2 weeks and droncit monthly (tapeworm)

Precaution for cats travelling abroad

Cats are also at risk from contracting the above disease.

Unfortunately, the options for safely protecting cats are more limited. there is no safe tick or sandfly repellent treatment for cats and no vaccination against Leishmaniasis (fortunately Leishmaniasis is much less common in cats than in dogs).

Protecting your cat will involve:

- Returning cats to the house before dusk (when sandflies become more active).
- Avoiding access to areas with a high prevalence of ticks (rough ground, forests, grazing areas).
- Applying Nexgard combo monthly for protection against heartworms as well as roundworms and tapeworms.
- Nexgard Combo will also kill ticks once they have attached so that they drop off more quickly (within 48 hours).
- Check your cat daily for ticks and remove any using tick removing hook.

Further Pet Travel Guidance

Extensive guidance is available from:

- <https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad>
- Pet Travel Scheme Helpline 0370 241 1710 (available Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm UK time (closed Bank Holidays). Email pettravel@apha.gov.uk
- Animal and PLant Health Agency (APHA) Centre of International Trade - Carlisle (CITC) Quarantine Section (03000 200 301)

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