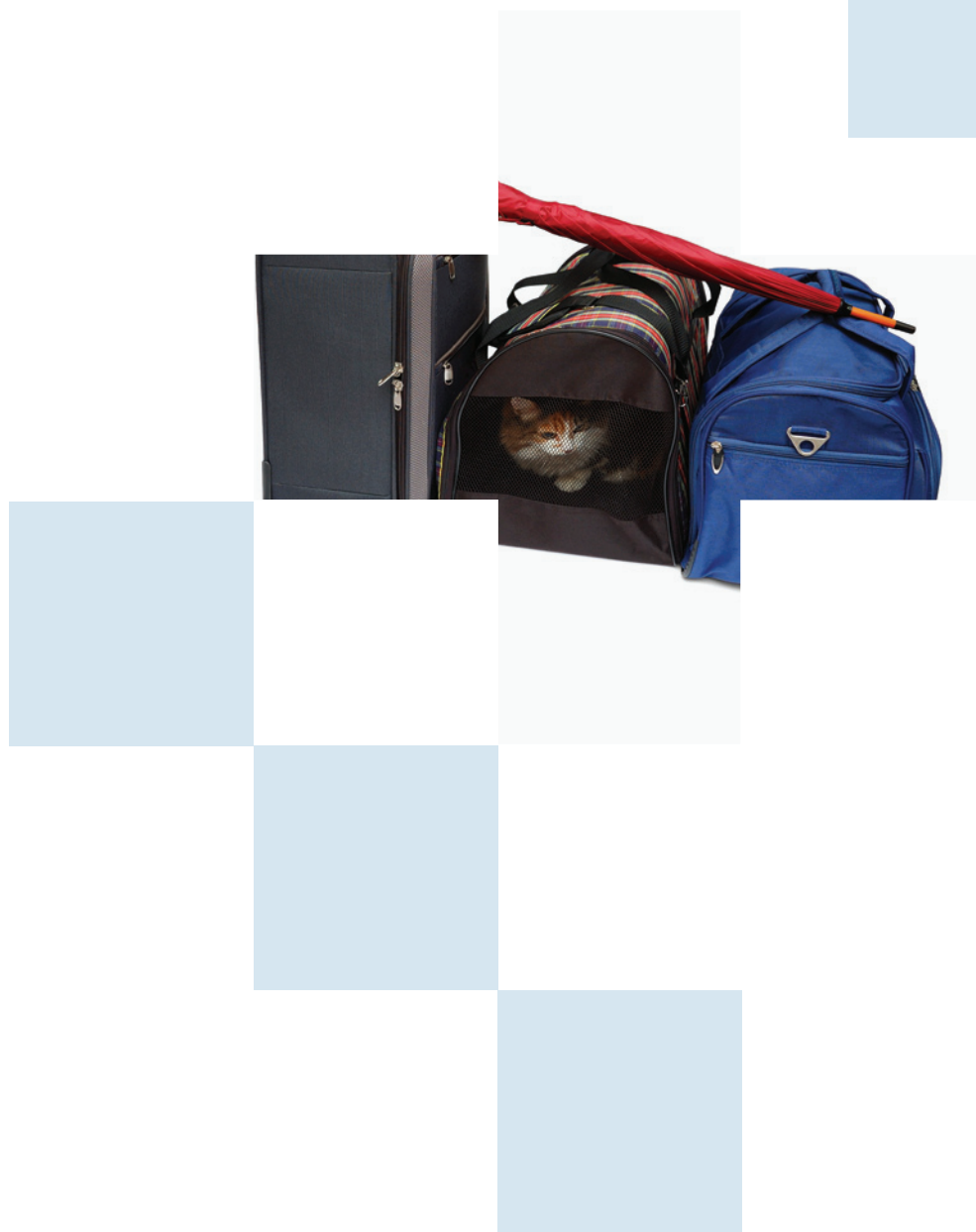


General Practice Service
Willows Information Sheets

Healthcare for pets travelling abroad





Healthcare for pets travelling abroad

When taking your pet abroad it is important to realise that there are potential disease risks which need to be considered. Animals from the UK will have no natural immunity to several diseases which are common in Europe and elsewhere.

The four main disease risks are Leishmaniasis, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis and Heartworm. All are potentially life threatening and so must be carefully considered before travel. These diseases are all transmitted to pets when they are bitten by an infected insect (an insect which spreads a disease in this way is known as a vector). Different insects, or vectors, spread different diseases. With the exception of Heartworm, the only way to protect your pet from catching the disease is to prevent it being bitten by the vectors. Therefore, it is useful to know the feeding habits of the vectors and where they are likely to be found. The tables below give information about these diseases and their insect vectors.

The lists of geographical areas mentioned in the tables are not exhaustive. Also, high risk times of day or year may be noted in the tables, but vectors will also feed outside these peak times. These diseases principally affect dogs, but cats may also be affected.

Whenever you are travelling abroad with your pet it is sensible to seek the advice of a local veterinary surgeon with regard to preventative health, as he or she will best know the local disease risks. If your pet falls ill while you are abroad you should seek veterinary assistance as soon as possible. It is worth finding out about local vets in the area before travelling, especially if language is going to be a problem.

Should your pet fall ill after you have returned to the UK, do remember to mention to your veterinary surgeon that your dog or cat has travelled or lived abroad, even if it was years previously, as some of these diseases can take many years to emerge.

Leishmaniasis



Cause of Leishmaniasis	Protozoal Parasite
Vector	Phlebotomine Sandfly
Where do Sandflies live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woods and gardens (not beaches!) • Mediterranean countries and islands
Feeding activity of Sandflies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially any time of day • Peak activity May to October
Prevention of bites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow dogs to sleep outside. Sandflies enjoy similar cool resting places to dogs! • Allowing animals to sleep upstairs may reduce bites, as Sandflies have limited flight • Environmental insect repellents – e.g. coils and plug-ins • Scalibor repellent collar for dogs
Speed of onset of illness	It may take up to 6 years for signs to develop after an animal has been bitten
Clinical signs of illness	Chronic or recurrent weight loss, skin and eye lesions, lameness and enlarged lymph nodes
Treatment	Variable success of treatment
Special considerations	Zoonosis (i.e. it can potentially be passed to humans)

Babesiosis



Cause of Babesiosis	Protozoal parasite of the red blood cell
Vector	Tick
Where do Ticks live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and rough grazing Including campsites! • France, Southern Europe but as far north as Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands
Feeding activity of Tick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially Spring and Autumn
Prevention of Tick bites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent tick attachment – repellent collars (Scalibor for dogs) • Treatments to kill attached ticks – Frontline (cats) or Advantix (dogs) • Daily checking and removal of ticks using Tick Hook (see note below)
Speed of onset of illness	Rapid onset disease is possible
Clinical signs of illness	Due to haemolytic anaemia (destruction of the red blood cells). Pale mucus membranes, jaundice, weakness, fast breathing, red urine, collapse, death
Treatment	May not be curative

Ehrlichiosis



Cause of Ehrlichiosis	A rickettsial parasite in the white blood cells
Vector	Tick
Where is this Tick found?	France, Corsica, Spain, Italy and Portugal, and further north to Germany, Belgium and Holland
Feeding activity	As for Babesiosis
Prevention	As for Babesiosis
Speed of onset of illness	Rapid onset disease, sub-clinical infection (i.e. the parasite is in the body but does not cause signs of illness) or chronic infection (i.e. causing a slower, long term illness) are all possible
Clinical signs	Fever, anorexia and enlarged lymph nodes

Heartworm (Dirofilariasis)



Cause of Heartworm	Nematode worm found in pulmonary arteries (those in the lungs) and heart
Vector	Mosquitoes
Where do the Mosquitoes live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From northern France south to the Mediterranean. Much of the USA and Canada • Hyper-endemic in the Po Valley in Italy
Feeding activity of Mosquitoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly at night but some species feed during the day • Especially from May to September
Prevention of Mosquito bites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small mesh nets or window covers • Environmental insect repellents – coils and plug-ins • Scalibor repellent collar for dogs
Prevention of disease	Drug prophylaxis (preventative treatment) using Milbemax tablets - start a month before exposure, then give monthly until one month after return to the UK. Where dogs may have been previously exposed, testing is required prior to treatment. Testing comprises blood tests and chest X-rays (radiographs)
Clinical signs	Associated with respiratory disease and heart failure

Summary General Recommendations

<p>Ticks</p>	<p>Prevent tick attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalibor collars (dogs) • Advantix spot-on (dogs) <p>Kill Ticks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline (cats) • Advantix spot-on (dogs) <p>Daily check for ticks and remove any found using a Tick Hook (see below)</p>
<p>Sandflies and Mosquitoes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your pet inside at times of peak activity • Use meshes/netting over windows • Use environmental repellents • Scalibor collar (dogs)
<p>Heartworm prevention</p>	<p>Monthly Milbemax tablets</p> <p>Start one month before exposure and continue until one month after return</p>



Tick



Tick Hook



Tick Hook

Images courtesy of TICK TWISTER® www.otom.com

Please note:

It is important to take great care when removing ticks to ensure that the mouth parts are fully removed. Failure to do so may cause an abscess or granuloma (inflamed lump) to develop. To ensure safe removal we recommend using a specially designed Tick Hook. These come with instructions for safe tick removal.

All of the above products can be supplied by Willows. Please telephone ahead, allowing time for the products to be ordered in. Please note that, for licensed veterinary products to be dispensed, your pet needs to be under our care.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

General Practice Service
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