

## **New rules for the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)**

**with effect from 1 January 2012**

**With the introduction of new legislation it will become cheaper and easier to travel abroad with your pets.**

The UK will harmonise its pet movement rules with the rest of the European Union from 1 January 2012, bringing the UK's Pet Travel Scheme into line with the most recent science. The UK will maintain its high level of protection against animal diseases after the changes.

Having pets spend six months in quarantine, a practice dating from the 1800's, is no longer necessary because of vastly improved rabies vaccines and treatments, but the requirements from the previous scheme are to be relaxed further.

All pets will still need to be vaccinated against rabies. Pets from the UK starting the scheme (and other EU and listed non-EU countries such as the USA and Australia) will no longer need a blood test and will only have to wait 21 days before they travel. Pets from unlisted non-EU countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa will be able to enter the UK if they meet certain strict criteria to ensure they are protected against rabies, including a blood test and a three-month wait before they enter the UK.

The changes will ensure the risk of rabies coming to the UK remains extremely low. It's estimated that the new rules mean there would be one case of rabies in a pet in the UK once every 211 years, with the possibility of a person dying from rabies obtained from a pet once in every 21,000 years.

The UK has been discussing with the European Commission the most appropriate form of tapeworm controls for dogs, to ensure the UK continues to be protected from *Echinococcus multilocularis* which is a worm that can cause serious or even fatal illness in humans. The Commission has recently indicated that its proposals, expected shortly, would enable the UK and other tapeworm-free countries to retain tapeworm controls, with a requirement that animals be treated between one and five days before returning to the UK.

Tick treatment for pet animals returning to the UK will no longer be required. All pet owners travelling abroad with their animals should discuss with Hillside the use of

treatments, including those designed to control ticks as part of good animal health practice.

The UK, along with Ireland, Sweden and Malta, has an exemption from the standard EU pet travel rules. These other countries are harmonising their entry rules with the rest of the EU at the same time as the UK.

It is very important to remember that the Pet Travel Scheme is really in place to prevent the entry of diseases that can cause serious illness or death to us as humans as well as our pets. Some of the scheme changes now leave the potential risk of allowing specific diseases that can infect our pets to enter the UK which would have previously been covered (eg, tick-borne diseases) and hence it's more important than ever to discuss the individual preventative treatments required for your pet in addition to those required in law by the scheme when you go away on holiday. These preventative strategies can be individually tailored to your area of travel and your time away from the UK. Hillside Vets are happy to discuss your individual requirements, check paperwork and your pet's micro-chip before travel, for reassurance. We recommend doing this two-four weeks prior to your holiday.

It is also advisable to think about any additional diseases that your dog may be exposed to while abroad, particularly if you're travelling to Mediterranean countries. These include leishmaniasis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, hepatozoonosis and heartworm. Prior to travelling, always book an appointment with a vet where we can tailor a preventative treatment plan for these potential diseases.

**For any further advice or guidance please contact Hillside Veterinary Centre (t: 01202 698899 e: [mail@hillsidevets.co.uk](mailto:mail@hillsidevets.co.uk)).**

Entry rules for pets re-entering the UK after going on holiday to the EU with you. A comparison of now and the changes with effect from 1 January 2012:

What has to be done	Previously	From 1 January 2012
Micro-chip	Yes	Yes
Rabies vaccination	Yes	Yes
Documentation (pet passport or third country certificate)	Yes	Yes
Blood test (dogs and cats)	Yes	No
Pre-entry waiting period	Yes	Yes
Length of waiting period before entry to the UK	6 months from date sample taken for blood test	21 days after vaccination against rabies
Tick treatment	Yes (24-48 hours before embarkation)	No
Tapeworm treatment	Yes (as for ticks)	Under consideration at European level

Finally, remember to pack a pet bag! Take things like favourite toys, food, water and a grooming kit. Also, make sure that your pet is comfortable for the journey, with plenty of room to lie down and turn around.

For a pre-holiday health check for your pet or further information about travelling abroad with your pet under PETS, call the practice to book an appointment.

Useful websites for further information:

**[www.future-of-vaccination.co.uk/pets-travel-abroad.asp](http://www.future-of-vaccination.co.uk/pets-travel-abroad.asp)**

**[www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel)**

*Disclaimer: The information and advice contained in this hand-out is for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for a veterinary examination and/or specific treatment or advice. You should always seek advice from your veterinary surgeon.*

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