

JIM'S PET PAGE



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Travelling with Your Pet

It may seem strange to talk about holidays now that the summer has ended but if you want to take your pet abroad for the first time you need to allow at least 7 months to get all the relevant paperwork and vaccinations completed.

The process of applying for a Pet Passport is simple but needs to be carried out in a certain order.

Firstly – The microchip



The microchip is inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades of your pet and is carried out in a normal consultation. The microchip is permanent and has a number unique to your pet. Your pets' details are registered on a central data base, so not only is a microchip the first step in allowing your pet to travel but has the added advantage of giving you a greater chance of being reunited with your pet should they go missing.

Secondly - rabies vaccination

Again, this is a simple injection carried out in a normal consultation and is no different to your pet having their annual booster vaccination. A full health check is carried out at the time of vaccination.

Thirdly - blood test

A blood sample is taken from your pet. This is carried out at least 30 days after the rabies vaccination. The sample is sent to an external laboratory and the level of antibodies produced to the rabies vaccination measured. In order to qualify for a pet passport the level of antibodies your pet has produced must be above a certain value. If the antibody response has not been high enough, your pet will need another rabies vaccination and another blood test 30 days later. The majority of

pets only need one vaccination but it is always sensible to allow enough time in case the first blood test is failed

Fourthly - passport is issued.



This is issued and certified by your veterinary surgeon once your pet has passed the blood test. Your pet must be present at the time as the vet needs to check the microchip and fill in all the relevant pet and owner details.

Fifthly - 6 month wait period

For first time pet passports there is a 6 month wait period from the time the blood test was taken to the time the pet passport is valid for re-entry into the UK. For example, if your pet has a microchip and vaccination against rabies on 1st October, a blood test on 1st November then assuming the blood test is passed and a passport issued, the earliest you can travel with your pet and re-enter the UK is 1st May the following year.

How long does a Pets Passport last?

Pet Passports are valid for 3 years from the date of the rabies vaccination. Further passports can be issued without the need for a further blood test and waiting period so long as repeat rabies vaccinations are given before the due date written on the passport. You should also be aware that you need to check the pet entry requirements of the country you are planning to visit as some EU countries require an annual rabies vaccination. You can check pet entry requirements on the DEFRA website or with the individual country's embassy.

What happens when you return to the UK

Before you can bring your pet back into the UK you need to visit a veterinary surgeon in the country you are leaving who will treat your pet for ticks and worms and stamp your pets passport to say they have been treated. This needs to be done within 48 hours of return to the UK. At the port of departure, customs officers will check your pets' microchip and their passport to ensure all UK entry requirements have been met.

Is a Pets Passport needed if you are going to live abroad and not planning to return to the UK?

If you are planning to live abroad and are not planning to return to the UK with your pet then for the majority of cases your pet will need a microchip, rabies vaccination and pets passport but won't need a blood test or a 6 month wait period. The blood test and wait period are only needed if you are planning to return to the UK. Again, each country's requirement for pet entry is different and it

is important that if you are planning to live abroad you check the individual country requirements before travel.

Finally, be aware that when you travel abroad your pet may be exposed to parasites and diseases that are not currently present in the UK. Many of these diseases are spread by



ticks

and sandflies



. There are products available from your veterinary surgeon to help protect your pet against these parasites and thereby reduce the risk of disease – so make an appointment with your vet before you travel.

Happy Travelling