

Epilepsy Fact Sheet

Traveling with an Epileptic Pet

This information sheet is designed to highlight some important considerations about traveling with your pet after the diagnosis of epilepsy. We understand that your pet's seizures can be overwhelming, and our aim is to empower you with knowledge and resources to help you navigate your healthcare journey. Traveling with a pet who has seizures is possible, but it takes extra planning. The goal is to reduce missed medications, avoid preventable stressors, and make sure you know where to go if a seizure happens away from home. Always defer to your veterinarians individual recommendations as they know your pet's medical needs best!

Should My Pet Travel If They Have Seizures?

Many pets with epilepsy can travel safely, especially if their seizures are well-controlled. However, travel may not be ideal if your pet has had a recent increase in seizures, cluster seizures, prolonged seizures, medication changes, or a recent emergency visit. Before a major trip, ask your veterinarian whether your pet is stable enough to travel and whether you need an updated seizure action plan. Knowing if your pet has triggers, such as stressful events, can also help with that decision, as some pets do get stressed or overstimulated in the car.

What Should I Do Before the Trip?

Schedule a planning conversation with your veterinarian before you leave. This is especially important if your pet has had cluster seizures, prolonged seizures, or needs rescue medication. Current veterinary consensus guidelines treat status epilepticus and cluster seizures as seizure emergencies that require rapid, organized intervention, so having a written plan before travel is helpful.

Ask your veterinarian:

- Is my pet stable enough to travel?
- Should we adjust medication timing for the trip?
- Do I need rescue medication?
- What should I do if my pet has one seizure?
- What should I do if my pet has more than one seizure?
- At what point should I go to an emergency hospital?
- Can we confirm my pet's current medications?
- Check and get any refills you may need prior to traveling across state lines.

What Should I Pack?

Pack more medication than you expect to need. A good rule is to bring enough for the entire trip plus several extra days in case of delays. Keep medications in their original labeled containers, since the FDA recommends keeping pet medications in original containers with intact, readable labels. Some medications are controlled, thus having them unlabeled and on your person could be risky for you.

Should Seizure Medications Go in Checked Luggage?

No, not if you can avoid it. Keep seizure medications with you in your carry-on, purse, backpack, or easily accessible travel bag. Luggage can be lost, delayed, exposed to heat, or inaccessible during an emergency. Prescription medications are generally best kept in their original containers with the prescription label visible when traveling.

What if My Pet Takes Medication Multiple Times a Day?

Try to keep medication timing as consistent as possible. Use alarms on your phone, especially if crossing time zones or changing your routine. Consider using Your Pet's Piece of Mind for notifications. Missing or delaying anti-seizure medication can increase the risk of breakthrough seizures in some pets.

What if We Cross Time Zones?

Ask your veterinarian how to adjust medication timing. For short trips, many pets can stay close to their home schedule. For longer trips or major time changes, your veterinarian may recommend gradually shifting the schedule. Do not guess, especially if your pet is on medications that must be given at strict intervals.

Should I Give My Pet Sedatives for Travel?

Only if your veterinarian recommends it. Some sedatives, anxiety medications, motion sickness medications, or supplements may interact with seizure medications or change your pet's behavior in a way that makes monitoring harder. Never give over-the-counter calming products, CBD products, antihistamines, or human medications without veterinary approval.

How Can I Reduce Seizure Triggers During Travel?

Not every pet has clear seizure triggers, but travel can add stress, sleep disruption, heat, missed meals, missed medication doses, and overstimulation. Keep the trip as predictable as possible.

Helpful strategies include:

- Keep medication times consistent
- Avoid overheating
- Provide water regularly
- Keep meals as close to normal as possible
- Avoid sudden diet changes
- Plan quiet breaks
- Use a secure crate or restraint
- Avoid chaotic dog parks, crowded events, or intense stimulation
- Let your pet rest after arrival

When Should I Go to an Emergency Hospital While Traveling?

Go to an emergency veterinarian right away if:

- The seizure lasts about 3- 5 minutes or longer
- Your pet has more than one seizure in 24 hours
- Your pet does not return to normal between seizures
- Recovery is unusually long or severe
- Your pet has trouble breathing or seems overheated
- Your pet may have been exposed to a toxin
- The seizure happened after trauma, heat exposure, or medication error
- You had to use rescue medication and your veterinarian told you to seek care afterward
- You have ANY CONCERNS! Always lean toward being overly cautious!

Should I Find an Emergency Hospital Before I Leave?

Yes. Before traveling, identify at least one emergency veterinary hospital near your destination and, if driving, along your route. Save the phone number and address in your phone. If your pet has a seizure disorder, do not wait until a seizure is happening to search for emergency care. Make sure

these locations are open 24 hours and have a copy of your pet's medical records and medications with you!

What If We Are Flying?

Contact the airline early and ask about pet policies, carrier rules, documentation, temperature restrictions, and whether your pet can travel in-cabin. For pets with epilepsy, in-cabin travel is often preferable when allowed because you can monitor your pet and access medication. Airline policies can vary, so confirm details directly with the airline before the trip.

What If We are Traveling Internationally?

Start planning early. [USDA APHIS](#) advises contacting a USDA-accredited veterinarian as soon as you decide to travel internationally because each destination country may have specific requirements for vaccines, testing, treatments, and health certificates.

For travel within the United States, APHIS notes that interstate pet movement requirements are set by the receiving state or territory, not APHIS, so requirements may vary depending on destination.

The more you can plan for the worst-case scenarios, the better prepared you will be!!

This information sheet is intended for educational purposes only and does not replace professional veterinary medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult a qualified veterinarian regarding your pet's health.