

Under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) animals must be:

- Positively identified by means of a microchip
- Vaccinated against rabies
- Blood sampled to prove they have responded to vaccination
- After six months they are allowed to re-enter the UK

Certain other provisions must be observed in the 24 – 48 hours before returning to the UK. These are:

- Treatment for tapeworms to prevent the entry into the UK of the parasite *Echinococcus multilocularis*, which is carried by many foxes abroad, can be transmitted to dogs and can cause potentially fatal disease in humans
- Treatment for ticks which may carry exotic diseases into the UK

Treatments must be undertaken and certified by a suitably qualified veterinarian.

The detailed rules of PETS with regard to documentation, procedures and participating countries are evolving constantly and it is a good idea to consult your vet for the most up-to-date advice. Pet owners should also inform their vet that they have travelled abroad with their pet should any illness develop following their return to the UK. Ensure that your pet is fully covered by pet health insurance and that you check that this cover extends to trips abroad.

This booklet outlines some of the more common diseases encountered abroad. The advice is very generalised and in all cases, pet owners are advised to ask their own vet for specific advice before travelling abroad.

Further information on PETS

If you would like further information on PETS then please contact the DEFRA on: 0870 241 1710, by email on: pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk or visit: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm



05/05



**BVA ANIMAL
WELFARE
FOUNDATION**

Taking your pets abroad



Your guide to diseases encountered abroad

Produced by the
BVA Animal Welfare Foundation
www.bva-awf.org.uk

In association with the
**Veterinary Advisory Group to the Association
of British Insurers Pet Insurance Forum**

BVA AWF is a registered charity (287118)

Pet Travel Scheme

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS), which permits the re-entry of animals to the UK without entering quarantine, has revolutionised our attitudes to and the practicality of taking pets abroad.

Quarantine was an efficient barrier not only to rabies but also many other exotic diseases that are common overseas but absent from home. Many diseases occurring abroad, but not seen in the UK, are transmitted by biting insects and ticks.

British pets abroad will not have met these diseases before and are likely to be highly susceptible. This information leaflet is to advise travellers about the risks and prevention of some common diseases.

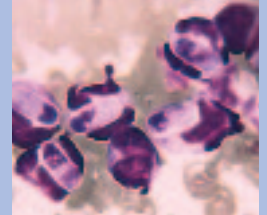
This booklet is aimed at pet owners who may be considering taking their pets abroad with them.

The BVA AWF would like to thank Professor Sandy Trees at Liverpool University Veterinary School for helping to compile this booklet and Merial Animal Health Ltd for providing many of the photographs used.



Hepatozoonosis

A widespread disease of both dogs and cats in warmer climates, this is caused by a protozoan parasite carried by a bloodsucking insect, mite or, most commonly, a tick.



Two main species affect dogs:

- *H.canis* – Europe, Africa, Asia and South America – fever, lethargy, weight loss, anaemia and secondary liver lung and kidney disease – diagnosed by blood sample
- *H.americanum* – southern states of the USA – severe pain, lameness and paralysis, abscesses (all in muscle) – diagnosed from muscle biopsy

Treatment is by a combination of chemical and anti-inflammatory treatment in the first instance.

Prevention of Hepatozoonosis



- **Tick control: specific spray, impregnated collars and spot-on medication is available from your vet. Apply before travelling and continue to do so regularly when abroad**
- **Under PETS tick treatment must be carried out between 24 – 48 hours before returning to the UK**
- **Feed your pet a commercial diet, prevent scavenging and hunting behaviour**
- **Avoid known severely affected tick habitats**



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Ehrlichiosis

Ehrlichiosis is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks. It is passed on when a tick feeds on the blood of an infected dog (or cat) and then bites another.



This disease is widely distributed throughout the world.

Symptoms of this disease vary widely and may include depression, fever, swollen glands and haemorrhages under the skin and elsewhere. Less common signs include vomiting, nasal discharge, lameness and severe inflammatory changes in the eyes. Chronic infections may progress to chronic debility, weight loss, arthritis and neurological disease including convulsions.

Diagnosis is confirmed by blood sample. Treatment is by antibiotics in the early stages. Cases of longstanding infection are less likely to respond and many affected dogs will die or require euthanasia.

Prevention of Ehrlichiosis



- **Tick control:** specific spray, impregnated collars and spot-on medication is available from your vet. Apply before travelling and continue to do so regularly when abroad
- Under PETS tick treatment must be carried out between 24 – 48 hours before returning to the UK
- Consult your vet if symptoms appear, always making it clear if your dog has been to an affected area

Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease transmitted by sandflies. It occurs commonly throughout the Tropics and especially the Mediterranean coastal area of southern Europe. The disease is caused by a protozoon, which is taken in by the bloodsucking insect when it feeds on an infected dog and completes part of its life cycle in the sandfly's gut.



Most common symptoms include dermatitis and skin infection, weight loss and eye, liver and kidney disease. The disease, if untreated is fatal and even with therapy is not curable, with affected animals being permanently infected. Symptoms can develop from a few months to several years after a visit abroad. Diagnosis can be confirmed from a blood test or microscopic examination of tissue samples.

Sandflies have a limited range and therefore local knowledge is useful before visiting an area. Sandflies feed at night and are more active in summer. Their range is increasing.

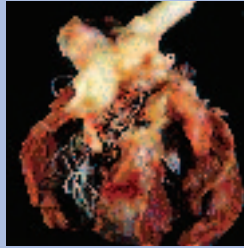
Prevention of Leishmaniasis

- Avoid 'high-risk' areas; leave your dog at home in the UK if necessary
- Keep animals indoors from one hour before dusk until one hour after sunrise. Use insecticides to control flies indoors
- Specific medication is available from your vet. Some medications may need to be applied two weeks prior to exposure
- There is no vaccine



Heartworm

Heartworm is a disease primarily of dogs, although cats are also at risk. It is transmitted by mosquito bites and is common in southern Europe, the USA and many tropical countries.



After infection, the larval worms develop for about six months inside the heart and the blood supply to the lungs. Signs of heart and lung disease occur over several years leading to death. Treatment at this stage is possible but hazardous.

Cats may also be affected although signs of the disease are more variable.

Diagnosis can be confirmed from blood samples.

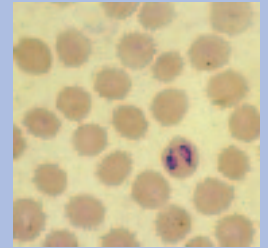
Prevention of Heartworm

- Avoid mosquito-infested areas
- Ask your vet about preventative treatment
- Always treat a dog if travelling to a heartworm area
- If abroad for less than a month, give preventative treatment on return
- If abroad for more than a month, give preventative treatment abroad
- If your dog has been exposed to infection without preventative treatment – even if it was some months ago – have a blood sample analysed; infections are far easier and safer to treat before major symptoms arise



Babesiosis

This disease is principally a problem in dogs and is transmitted by ticks. Ticks are relatively common on the continent of Europe and in other countries outside it.



When the tick feeds, saliva is injected into the host together with the *Babesia* organisms which invade and multiply in red blood cells. A tick biting an infected animal will become infected itself, and can go on to infect other dogs.

Affected animals develop fever, anaemia, weakness, lethargy, weight loss, anorexia and red urine. This can be associated with jaundice ('biliary fever'). Sudden death can occur.

Diagnosis can be confirmed from blood samples. Treatment is by specific drugs plus supportive treatment such as blood transfusions in severely anaemic dogs.

Prevention of Babesiosis



- Tick control: specific spray, impregnated collars and spot-on medication is available from your vet. Apply before travelling and continue to do so regularly when abroad
- Under PETS tick treatment must be carried out between 24 – 48 hours before returning to the UK