

moving your dog to a new home

dog training basics

Moving to a new home can be stressful for your dog. Advanced planning, patience and affection can help your dog adjust quickly to their new home.

Before the move:

Prepare your pet for the move a few weeks before the actual day. Pack over a period of time and try to maintain your pet's normal routine. Buy a carrier that will allow your pet to sit and lie comfortably inside. If your dog is not accustomed to a pet carrier or crate, take the time to get your dog used to the new carrier before the move. If the trip to the new home is more than two hours, use a carrier that holds food and water. Clip your dog's nails to protect them against getting caught in the carrier door, holes and other crevices.

As soon as you know your new address and telephone number, get a pet ID tag with the new information on it. Have your dog wear both ID tags right before and after the move to ensure that if your dog gets lost, you can be located.

During the move:

On moving day, place your dog in a safe, quiet place, such as the bathroom, so they cannot escape. Make sure to provide food and water for your dog. Place a large sign on the door that says "Do not enter," and make sure that friends and professional movers are aware that the room is off limits. Assign a family member to be in charge of the dog to ensure that they do not get left behind during a hectic moving day. Carry recent photographs of your dog in case they get lost.



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

Traveling by car:

The safest way for a dog to travel is to have an appropriately sized crate for them inside the car. Take time to have them get used to traveling in the crate. If you have a puppy, the earlier you start getting them accustomed to traveling in a crate in the car, the better and safer traveling with your dog will be. You can also get them accustomed to a restraining harness. Don't let your dog stick their head out the window, as they can be injured by flying debris.

If your dog doesn't like riding in cars, consult your veterinarian about behavior modification or medication that might reduce the stress of travel. It may be best to use a carrier to ensure the safety of both you and your dog. You can also work with a professional behaviorist to set up a training plan to have your dog get used to traveling.

Never leave your dog alone in a parked vehicle in warm weather, as the temperature can rise quickly and cause heat stroke. A dog left alone in the car can also encourage theft.

Never put your dog in the trunk of a car, the open bed of a pickup truck or the storage area of a moving van. These places can cause injury to your dog in the case of a sudden stop.

Traveling by air:

Traveling by air takes advance planning. Try not to transport your pet by air unless absolutely necessary. Check with your veterinarian, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the airline if your pet will be flying. You will need to take precautions to ensure your pet's safety, and you will need to provide your pet's recent health certificate to the airline.

If you have a small dog, most airlines will allow you to take your pet on board for an additional fee. Call the airline well in advance of your flight since there are limits to the number of animals allowed in the cabin.

You also need to determine whether the airline you'll be using:

- Has any restrictions on transporting dogs as cargo
- Has any special pet health and immunization requirements
- Requires a specific type of carrier
- Has any breed restrictions

If your dog must travel in the cargo hold:

- Use direct flights to avoid transfer delays and mistakes
- Travel on the same flight as your pet
- Do not travel when it is excessively hot or cold as most cargo areas are not temperature-controlled

Preparing your new home:

As you move your possessions into the new house, be aware of items that can cause harm to your dog. Stoop down and look around the house at your dog's eye level. Look for anything that is within reach of your dog that can cause harm.

Make sure your new home is safe for your dog. Check for hazards such as:

- Poison – Cleansers, insect repellent, pesticides, medications, certain plants and antifreeze
- Burning – Plugged-in appliances (irons, heaters, etc.), boiling liquids and open flames
- Electricity – Worn appliance cords
- Choking hazard – Small items such as sewing thread, needles and bones
- Falling objects – Look for precariously placed appliances and furniture
- Escape – Loose screens and inadequate fences

Choose a veterinarian and take a practice drive to the nearest emergency veterinary clinic. Trying to find a clinic when you really need it can waste precious time.

Settling into the new home:

When you arrive at your destination, open the carrier as soon as you are in a safe place and examine your pet. Spend some time playing with your dog and reassure them that everything is okay and this is now their new home. Provide a treat or a new toy so that your dog will associate the new place with fun. If anything seems wrong, take your pet to a veterinarian immediately.

Set up your dog's belongings so that they will immediately recognize the familiar items. With familiar furniture including their bed, crate, toys and food and water bowls, your dog should be able to settle quickly into their new home. Allow your dog to explore their new home and familiarize themselves with the new sights and smells. You can keep your dog on a leash during the first walkthrough of your new home to ensure you keep them safe and secure and notice any potentially harmful areas. Make sure all doors, windows and fences are secured so your dog will not accidentally wander away.

Remove the old ID tag from your dog's collar and make sure the new ID tag is secured on their collar. Also, be sure to update their microchip information. Try to maintain your pet's normal routine as you unpack. Try not to disturb the location you have chosen for your dog. Having a secure place to go to is important for your dog in an unfamiliar place.

Taking your dog out for a walk around the new neighborhood will also acquaint them with their new surroundings. Have patience and allow them to explore everything around their new home. You may want to introduce your dog to your new neighbors. Your neighbors' familiarity with your pet may help in the recovery of your dog if they ever get lost. Make sure to keep your dog on a leash when meeting new people.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian.