

*Note this leaflet is not comprehensive* – if travelling abroad you should seek up to date information especially from the DEFRA website which also gives advice on pet passports

**My pet has had his\her rabies vaccination, is that all they need before travelling?**

Just like with humans having malaria treatment (or using insect repellent) when travelling overseas, it is sensible to protect your pet from diseases that are likely to be present in different countries before travelling to them. Worm treatment is mandatory as part of the Pet Passport scheme, as a strategy to stop the fox tapeworm, *Echinococcus multilocularis* from entering the UK from Europe.

**Which diseases are common in Europe?**

Leishmaniasis - found especially in the south of France, where up to 90% of animals are infected. This is a microscopic parasite which multiplies in the white blood cells and can affect many organs, including the kidneys, eyes, skin and joints, in addition to causing intermittent fever, weight loss and anaemia. It also can lie dormant for months to years before symptoms occur. It is transmitted by sand fly bites. Heartworm - This is a parasitic worm which is again transmitted by biting flies. They can grow to 30cm in length and live within the heart and major blood vessels. The symptoms shown by affected pets are from the heart failure this infection can cause - i.e. coughing, getting tired very easily, and a build up of fluid within the lungs and abdomen. The worms can also block the blood vessels completely, which can be fatal Babesiosis - Another microscopic parasite, which attacks red blood cells. Symptoms include pale gums from severe anaemia, fever, and often jaundice and red discolouration of the urine. Collapse and sudden death are also, unfortunately, a possibility. Transmitted by tick bites. Ehrlichiosis - Again, transmitted when a tick latches on and feeds from the animal. This is a bacteria that invades white blood cells and can cause long term problems with blood clotting and immunity, leading to severe infections and blood clotting problems.

**What can I do to prevent these?**

Vaccination - Only available for Leishmaniasis. 3 doses of vaccine are given at 3 week intervals - so it is a good idea to start the course at least 10 weeks before you and your pet are due to travel. Worming – Either the spot-on Advocate or Milbemax tablets can be used to prevent heartworm. Treatment should be started a month before departure, and continued for a month after return. Sand fly Prevention - Sand flies prefer wooded areas and gardens, rather than beaches, so the latter is definitely preferable for walking your dog. For additional protection, some spot-ons such as Advantix contain sand fly repellent along with tick and flea protection. Tick Prevention - Avoid rough ground and forests where there are grazing animals (e.g. sheep, deer), and thoroughly examine your dog each day to check for and remove any attached ticks (use a special tick puller for this rather than tweezers as the latter can leave the tick's mouthparts behind causing local irritation and swelling). Use Advantix spot-on or a Seresto collar to help repel ticks.

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