

MOVING YOUR PET

Our four legged family members may find a move to a new home very stressful. Right from the arrival of the empty moving boxes they sense something is happening and begin to feel uneasy. Pets favour routine and your move may disrupt every aspect of their lives.

Even the trip to the new home can be traumatic. Most moves for pets are in the family automobile. Many pets are only put in the car to be taken to the vets office and the pet may assume that is the destination. You will have to be especially considerate of your pets' feelings and needs at this time. Obtain a travel cage that is large enough for your pet to rest in comfortably. Bring along the pets' favourite food and a supply of water. When you stop for pet breaks, never let the pet out of your car without being on a leash. When they are nervous they are apt to bolt and could end up in the path of another vehicle or run off into the city or countryside. No matter what type of pet you own, be sure to call ahead to ensure your overnight accommodation is pet friendly. Even in moderate weather, overnight alone in the car is just too traumatic for them.

Cats cope less easily than dogs. They especially need their routines. Suddenly they must adjust to brand new surroundings. Gone is their favourite perch on the back of the sofa overlooking the familiar street. Their litter box is moved. Their drinking water smells strange. Vets warn us that cats stress easily. I personally once had a cat so upset by moving, it became almost bald. Sometimes cats go off their food.

To ease the upset try following these steps. While in your present home, shut your cat in a quiet room with things that are most familiar. Include his favourite toys and food, water and a small litter box. Put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door for moving day so that the moving people do not invade the space. After arriving at the new home, set up the same scenario. Don't let the cat out until he has settled and is naturally curious about the new abode. This can take a few days. For his introduction to his new outdoor area, keep him on a leash until you can tell he is not going to race off and start an "Incredible Journey" home to the old place.

Dogs find the process easier. Usually, where the owners are, the dog is happy to be. Make sure to use his leash for all outings just to be safe.

Take time to be with your pet. Talk to him. The sound of your voice is reassuring.

If you have concerns about your pet coping with the transition, be sure to consult your veterinarian.