



Paws For Pets

Moving: How to Move Your Pet Safely

If you and your pet are getting ready to move, follow these recommendations to keep your companion safe on moving day.

- **Plan ahead.** Advance planning will make your move less stressful on you and your pet. Pack over a period of time, and try to maintain your pet's normal routine.
- **Invest in a high-quality, sturdy pet carrier.** If you have a dog or cat whom you want to keep safely confined on moving day, get a carrier ahead of time and gradually accustom your pet to spending time in it.
- **Purchase a new ID tag for your pet.** As soon as you know your new address, get a pet ID tag that includes your new address and telephone number(s). (Or obtain some other visible form of pet identification such as a collar with ID information imprinted on it or an identification band that attaches to the collar but does not dangle like a traditional tag.) An up-to-date ID tag is a lost pet's ticket home.
- **Keep your pet secure.** On moving day, place your pet (whether in the carrier or not) in a safe, quiet place, such as the bathroom, so that he or she cannot escape. Place a large sign on the door that says, DO NOT ENTER, and be sure that friends and professional movers are aware that the room is off-limits.
- **Make your car trip safe.** If you're traveling by car and your dog enjoys car travel, you may want to accustom him to a restraining harness. Because most cats aren't comfortable traveling in cars, it's best (for their safety as well as yours) to transport them in a well-ventilated and securely placed carrier. Never leave pets alone in a parked vehicle during warm weather as the temperature rises quickly and can injure



or kill them. In any season, a pet in a parked vehicle is vulnerable to being harmed or stolen. Never put an animal in

the trunk of a car, the open bed of a pickup truck, or the storage area of a moving van.

- **Talk to your veterinarian.** If your pet doesn't enjoy car rides, consult your veterinarian about behavior modification or medication that might lessen the stress of travel. Depending on your destination, your pet may also need additional vaccinations, medications, and health certificates.
- **Find hotels in advance.** Listings of pet-friendly hotels will help you find overnight lodging during your move. Our online information on Finding Pet-Friendly Hotel Accommodations will point you toward some useful resources and get your planning on track.
- **Plan ahead for air travel.** Check with your veterinarian, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the airline if your pet will be flying. Also be sure to check out our online tips for traveling with your companion animal. You will need to take precautions to ensure your pet's safety, so give yourself ample time to work out all the arrangements.
- **Prepare your new home.** Take with you all the familiar and necessary things your pet will need from day one in your new home: food, water, medications, bed, litter box, food and water bowls, and health records. Also have on hand a recent photo of your pet, for use if your pet becomes lost.

Allergies to Pets

Being a pet owner is never easy. While pets bring us joy and companionship on a daily basis, they also require training, veterinary care, time, love, attention, and even tolerance. Tolerance is especially necessary when a pet owner is allergic to his or her companion animal.



Studies show that approximately 15% of the population is allergic to dogs or cats. An estimated one-third of Americans who are allergic to cats (about two million people) live with at least one cat in their household anyway. In a study of 341 adults who were allergic to cats or dogs and had been advised by their physicians to give up their pets, only one out of five did. What's more, 122 of them obtained another pet after a previous one had died. It's clear the benefits of pet companionship outweigh the drawbacks of pet allergies for many owners. Living comfortably with a companion animal despite being allergic to him requires a good understanding of the allergic condition and an adherence to a few rules.

All cats and dogs are allergenic (allergy-causing) to people who are allergic to animals. Cats tend to be more allergenic than dogs for allergic people, although some people are more sensitive to dogs than cats. Contrary to popular belief, there are no "non-allergenic" breeds of dogs or cats; even hairless breeds may be highly allergenic.

Dogs with soft, constantly-growing hair—the Poodle or the Bichon Frise, for example—may be less irritating to some individuals, although this may be because they are bathed and groomed more frequently. One dog or cat of a particular breed may be more irritating to an individual allergy sufferer than another animal of that same breed.

The source of irritation to pet-allergic humans? Glands in the animal's skin secrete tiny allergy-triggering proteins, called allergens, that linger in the animal's fur but also float easily in the air. Allergens are present in the animal's saliva and urine, too, and may become airborne when saliva dries on the fur. The severity of reaction to these allergens varies from one person to the next, ranging from mild sniffing and sneezing to life-threatening asthma, and can be complicated by simultaneous allergies to other irritants in the environment.

If your or a family member's allergies are simply miserable, but not life-threatening, take these steps to reduce the symptoms:

- Create an "allergy free" zone in the home—

preferably the bedroom—and strictly prohibit the pet's access to it. Use a high-efficiency HEPA air cleaner (available at almost any home and garden store or discount department store) in the bedroom. Consider using impermeable covers for the mattress and pillows because allergen particles brought into the room on clothes and other objects can accumulate in them.

- Use HEPA air cleaners throughout the rest of the home, and avoid dust-and-dander-catching furnishings such as cloth curtains and blinds and carpeted floors. Clean frequently and thoroughly to remove dust and dander, washing articles such as couch covers and pillows, curtains, and pet beds. Use a "microfilter" bag in the vacuum cleaner to effectively catch all the allergens.
- Bathing your pet on a weekly basis can reduce the level of allergens on fur by as much as 84%. Although products are available that claim to reduce pet allergens when sprayed on the animal's fur, studies show they are less effective than a weekly bath. Even cats can become accustomed to being bathed; check with your veterinarian's staff or a good book on pet care for directions about how to do this properly, and use whatever shampoo your veterinarian recommends.
- Don't be quick to blame the family pet for allergies. Ask your allergist to specifically test for allergies to pet dander, rather than making an assumption. And understand that allergies are cumulative. Many allergy sufferers are sensitive to more than one allergen. So if you're allergic to dust, insecticides, pollen, cigarette smoke, and cat dander, you'll need to reduce the overall allergen level in your environment by concentrating on all of the causes, not just the pet allergy. For example, you may need to step up measures to remove cat dander from your home and carefully avoid cigarette smoke during spring, when it is difficult to avoid exposure to pollen.
- Immunotherapy (allergy shots) can improve symptoms but cannot eliminate them entirely. They work by gradually desensitizing a person's immune system to the pet allergens. Allergy-causing proteins are injected under the person's skin, triggering the body to produce antibodies (protective proteins) which block the pet allergen from causing a reaction. Patients are usually given one dose per week for a few weeks to months (depending on the severity of the allergy) and then can often manage with one injection per month.

Allergies to Pets continued ...

- Additional treatments for allergies to pets are symptomatic, including steroidal and antihistamine nose sprays and antihistamine pills. For asthma, there are multiple medications, sprays, and inhalers available. It is important to find an allergist who understands your commitment to living with your pet. A combination of approaches—medical control of symptoms, good housecleaning methods, and immunotherapy—is most likely to succeed in allowing an allergic person to live with pets.

Of course, if you do not currently have a pet and are considering one, and know you are pet-allergic, be sure to consider carefully whether you can live with the allergy before you bring a new pet home. Except in the case of children, who sometimes outgrow allergies, few allergy sufferers become accustomed to pets to whom they are allergic. Too many allergic owners obtain pets without thinking through the difficulties of living with them. And too often, they end up relinquishing pets, a decision that is difficult for the owner and can be life-threatening for the pet.

What You Can Do If You Are Having Trouble Affording Veterinary Care



Many pet owners, at one point or another, are faced with unexpected veterinary bills. Veterinary medicine has progressed so far that now pet owners have new, and often expensive, options for the care of their ailing pets. Although the cost of veterinary care is

actually very reasonable in comparison with the much higher cost of human health care, an unexpected medical emergency can present a major financial dilemma for an unprepared pet owner.

The Humane Society of the United States recommends that, in addition to preparing for routine pet-care costs, you regularly set aside savings to cover for unexpected veterinary bills. Create a special "pet savings account" and contribute money to it on a regular basis.

If, despite your planning, your pet incurs major veterinary expenses that you have trouble affording, consider these suggestions:

- **Ask your veterinarian if he or she will let you work out a payment plan.** Many veterinarians are willing to work out a weekly or monthly payment plan so that you do not have to pay the entire cost of veterinary care up front.
- **Contact your local shelter.** Some shelters operate or know of local subsidized veterinary clinics or veterinary assistance programs. You can find the name and number of your [local shelter](#) in the Yellow Pages of your phone book under "animal shelter," "animal

control," or "humane society," or by calling Information. You can also go to www.Pets911.com and enter your zip code to find a list of animal shelters, animal control agencies, and other animal care organizations in your community.

- **If you have a specific breed of dog, contact the National Club for that breed.** In some cases, these clubs offer a veterinary financial assistance fund.
- **Ask your veterinarian to submit an assistance request to the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) "Helping Pets Fund."** In order to qualify, your animal hospital must be AAHA accredited. To learn more about the program visit the [AAHA web site](#). To find a AAHA accredited hospital in your area, search online at www.Pets911.com.
- **Use your credit card.** Ask for a higher credit limit or a cash advance.
- **Call your bank.** Ask about loan programs, second mortgages, or other options. Consider borrowing from your life insurance policy, vacation savings, kids' education fund, or retirement program.
- **Ask your employer for a salary advance.**
- **Alert family and friends and ask them each for a \$25 loan.**
- **Pawn your stuff.** TVs and VCRs can be replaced. Your pet can't.
- **Consider taking on a part-time job or temping.**
- **Contact the regional office of The HSUS that covers your state.** Our [regional office](#) staff is often familiar with organizations and personnel within their territory and may be able to direct you to programs in your area.

Please remember that, depending on the severity of your pet's illness or injury, you may still lose your pet even after great expense. Discuss the prognosis and treatment options

Affording Veterinary Care continued...

thoroughly with your veterinarian, including whether surgery or treatment would just cause your animal discomfort without preserving a life of good quality.

Also remember that a little preventive care can go a long way. Having your pet spayed or neutered, keeping her shots up to date, and keeping your pet safely confined can prevent serious and costly health problems. If you have trouble affording the cost to spay or neuter your pet, contact your local animal shelter. They may operate a clinic or know of a local clinic that offers subsidized services.

Unfortunately, due to our limited resources as a nonprofit animal protection organization, The HSUS does not provide direct financial assistance to pet owners for veterinary or any other expenses. If you know of any veterinary assistance services, funds, or low-cost veterinary clinics, please let us know by calling 202-452-1100.

Animal Cruelty Laws: Where Does Your State Stand?

Every state has a law against animal cruelty. But what's surprising is the degree to which the states differ in their prohibition of cruelty. While some states have strong felony-level penalties, others still categorize egregious acts of intentional cruelty, such as setting an animal on fire or maliciously beating an animal, as misdemeanors or felonies with relatively weak penalties.

As of 2003, 41 states have enacted felony-level penalties for certain acts of animal cruelty, 33 of them in the last ten years. Some states have relatively effective laws that do not contain felony-level penalties, and not all states with felony-level provisions have otherwise strong laws. While the majority of states cover all animals, several restrict felony-level penalties to crimes against zoo or companion animals.

A good felony anti-cruelty law should:

- Apply to all animals.
- Apply to first-time offenders.
- Have large fines and lengthy prison time as penalties.
- Have no exemptions.
- Allow or require convicted abusers to get counseling at their own expense.
- Prohibit abusers from possessing animals or living where animals are present.

Additionally, statutes should be combined with a strong commitment to enforce the law. Police, psychologists and even the FBI recognize the link between animal cruelty and acts of violence toward people. To better protect communities, all states should have strong penalties and should work to educate and increase community awareness of the significance of animal cruelty crimes.

For more information, a copy of your state's statute, or for tips on how to make your state's law more effective, please send an e-mail to jjanovsky@hsus.org in The HSUS Government Affairs Section.
