

Ask A Vet: Travel Tips for the Trail

Sunday, May 10, 2015

Dear Dr. Weldy's,

I'm thinking of taking my horse on some trips to some different clinics and trail rides this summer. I might bring my dogs along on some trips with camping as well. Is there anything I need to do to get them ready for travel?

Dear Reader,

Just like you, your pets require some preparation for travel. Let's start with your horse. You need to be sure your horse is current on vaccines. Not only will you want your horse protected with what we consider "core" vaccines, but you'll also want to consider protection against diseases that being around other horses might put yours at risk for, like equine influenza and rhinopneumonitis. If you're planning to travel very frequently into the fall or winter, you may also want to consider boosting for some of these diseases more frequently. If traveling out of state, even if just crossing the Michigan line, your horse will need a health certificate and a negative Coggins test as well. Keep in mind that health certificates are typically good for only 30 days, and Coggins tests can take over a week for results, when scheduling an appointment.

For your dog, you should also be sure that vaccines are current. Especially if you board your dog, but also if you'll be around a lot of other dogs, be sure to be up to date on kennel cough. Depending where you plan to travel to, you might also consider the canine influenza vaccine. If you plan to take your dog camping, you should also consider the Lyme disease vaccine. Depending on which state you will be visiting, your dog may also require a health certificate. You should check with that state's animal health department and call your vet if you have any questions. Some dogs get nervous and/or sick during traveling. If this is your dog, talk to your vet about treatment options for anxiety or motion sickness.

Regardless of legal requirements, if your horse or dog has not recently been examined by a veterinarian, a checkup to ensure they are healthy is a good idea. Travel can be stressful, even for a laid back animal, and stress can exacerbate issues that normally cause no problems.

Happy healthy pets make great travel companions and hopefully you and yours can enjoy some great vacations this summer!

-Dr. Kathryn Ernst