



VETERINARY SURGERY

MOVING WITH YOUR PETS



Moving house rates as one of the most stressful lifetime experiences for people, along with weddings, divorce and the birth of a child. Luckily most pets take a move to a new house in their stride; providing there are familiar things such as their family, food and toys close to hand. Some are upset by changes and you need to take precautions to prevent them getting too upset.

There are many things that you can do to make the move as easy a possible for your pets. You will find specific advice for a variety of pets in the sections below, but here are a few general points to consider

Before you move

- Your pet may be upset by the packing which is going on in their old house. Either find them a quiet room out of the way, or consider asking a familiar friend to look after them for a day or two. Kennels and catteries can also be used if your pet is used to staying there.
- Ensure dogs are properly restrained and cats are in their carriers or animals are shut away in a well marked room, long before you or the removal men start to move furniture.
- Leave your animal's familiar possessions around them until the last moment. Do not wash bedding for a few weeks before and the move, so it smell familiar in the new house.
- If your dog or cat travels badly, consider medication from your vet to help with travel sickness.
- Consider using pheromones to help dogs and cats feel settled and calmer during the move. Other medications can also be given. Speak to your vet several weeks before the move to discuss what is best for your pet.
- Before you leave the house, have your animal properly restrained and keep them like that for the rest of the journey.

When you arrive at your new home

- Keep daily routines and feeding times the same
- Make sure your animal has some familiar objects in your new home
- Check vaccinations are up to date
- Change your details on your microchip registration and collar tag
- Use calming training techniques, especially with dogs
- Consider calming therapies if your animal is stressed
- Find or take a good photograph of your pet
- Register with a new veterinary surgery

If you think your animal is not settling into your new home, please consult us as early as possible. We can treat with



behavioural therapy or medication as appropriate. Many problems are quickly sorted out with just appropriate advice.

Dogs

Unpack your dog's bowls, toys and bed before letting him into the house, so there are familiar objects and smells for him to find. Settle him in one room with his familiar possessions and shut the door, so that there is no chance of him escaping through an open front door whilst you unpack.

Before letting him in the garden check that it is secure. Look out for areas where the fence is low enough to jump over and make sure there are no holes in the fence or places where your dog could squeeze underneath. If so, you should not allow your dog into the garden unless he is on a lead, until you are able to make the necessary repairs.

Try to keep his routine as similar as possible to the one that he is used to. Feed and walk him at the same times, even if you are walking him in different places.

Make sure his vaccinations are up to date so that he is protected against any new diseases he may come across.



You may find that even the best trained dog has occasional accidents until he settles in his new home. Don't punish him or make a fuss; clean it up with diluted biological washing powder (make sure this doesn't stain your new carpet). When he does go to the toilet in the correct place, praise him for doing so.

There are several products including pheromone scents and medications that may help your dog to settle more quickly in his new home. These are available from Veterinary Surgeons. Please make an appointment to discuss your dog's needs.

Introduce your dog to your neighbours, the postman and other regular visitors as soon as possible after moving in. Ask your neighbours to let you know if there are any problems or they hear that your dog is barking or distressed whilst you are out.

If your dog is identichipped contact Petlog immediately to give them your new contact details. They can be contacted on 08706066751 or www.petlog.org.uk. Every year a number of dogs who have been chipped are not reunited with their owners, because the owner's details have changed, but they have not notified Petlog. Please make sure this does not happen to you.

If your dog is not identichipped already, consider having it done before you move.

Have a new collar tag made with your name, new address and phone number (including mobile number if possible). Attach this to his collar as soon as you move, in case he goes missing.

Make sure you have a good photograph of him. If he does go missing and you may need it to show to neighbours.

Register with a Veterinary Surgeon and make sure you know their phone number, where they are and what their out of



hours procedure is, in case of emergencies. Give them the details of your previous address and veterinary surgeon so that any medical records can be transferred.

Cats

When you arrive at your new home, keep your cat in her carrier until you have set one room up ready for her. This room should contain food, water and a litter tray, along with a familiar bed or favourite blanket. Ensure all windows and doors are closed and fireplaces and any other small holes are blocked up. It is sensible to put a notice on the outside of the door reminding everyone involved in the removal that this room contains has a loose cat and the door should be kept shut at all times. When the room is ready, let the cat out of the carrier and allow her to explore this room. If you want to spend time with her, sit quietly in the corner of the room and allow her to approach you when ready.



After everything has been moved into the house and all the exterior doors are firmly shut, then you can allow your cat out to explore a little. Let her do this in her own time, don't rush her from room to room. A few cats will not want to leave their safe room for several days; this is fine, don't rush them.

Some cats adapt to new homes with no problem at all; they just curl up in an armchair as if they have been there all their life. Other cats take much longer to settle in. If your cat is one of the nervous ones you can help her to feel more secure by making the house smell familiar to her. Rub a soft cloth gently around her cheeks and head to collect the scent from the glands around her face. Rub this cloth against door-frames, corners of walls and corners of furniture. This will help her to feel at home. There is a synthetic version which can be used as a spray or a plug in to help a cat settle in their new home.

Use the routine that your cat was used to in your old house to help them to settle into the new one. Feed and play with her at the same times each day.

Make sure your cat is up to date with her vaccinations before you let her out.

Keep your cat indoors for at least two weeks to allow her to get used to her new home before letting her outside. Chase away any cats you see in the garden to help your cat establish her own territory. Introduce her to the outside by going out into the garden with her. If she is used to a harness you could take her out into the garden on a lead at first. Don't force or carry her outside; allow her to decide when she is ready to go. Leave a door open, or ensure she can use the cat flap before you leave her alone in the garden on her own. If she finds something frightening you want her to be able to run back inside.



If your cat is identichipped contact Petlog straight away to give them your new contact details. They can be contacted on 08706066751 or www.petlog.org.uk. If your cat is not identichipped already, consider having it done before you let her out. Every year, many cats who have been chipped are not reunited with their owners because the contact details have changed, but Petlog has not been updated. Make sure this does not happen to you.

Whilst we would not normally advise collars for cats, it is worth using a collar and identity tag showing your contact details for a few weeks when you first let your cat out. Make sure the collar has a quick release section in case she gets caught in anything.

Register with a Veterinary Surgeon and make sure you know their phone number, location and out of hours procedure in case of emergencies. Give them details of your old surgery and your previous address so that they can get your cat's previous medical history.

Make sure you have a good photograph of her just incase she does go missing and you need to show it to neighbours.

If your old home is nearby, you may find that your cat tries to return to her familiar territory. Warn the occupiers of your old house that she may come back and ask them not to feed her or encourage her in any way, just to contact you if she appears. If your cat does return to the old house, it is best to keep her in the new house for as long as possible before letting her out, but this may not be practical or fair to some outdoor cats. Follow the advice above for settling your cat into your new home, including the use of scents and be prepared to retrieve her repeatedly until she gets used to her new surroundings.



Rabbits, Guinea Pigs, Hamsters, Gerbils and Mice

Place these animals in their normal hutch or cage as soon as possible after the move so that their surroundings are familiar to them. Leave used bedding in the cage so that it smells familiar. Offer them some of their favourite food and make sure they have water.

Shut them in a quiet room or place the hutch in a shady place in the garden to allow them a chance to settle and to become acclimatised to their new surroundings.

Before you let rabbits or guinea pigs out in the garden or a run, make sure there is no chance of them escaping. Ensure they do not have access to any poisonous plants.

If your rabbit is going outside make sure their vaccinations are up to date.



Fish

Make sure you do not site your tank anywhere dramatically different to where it was before e.g. do not move a tank from a dark corner of the room into a bright sunny window or you may find that the temperature and conditions are very different from those that the fish are used to.

Get the tank, pump and filter up and running again as soon as possible after you arrive. If you removed the fish from the tank to move them, condition the new water in the tank and ensure that the water in the tank and the travel container are the same temperature before you release the fish into the tank.

For the next week or so, monitor your fish carefully as they may be stressed and check the water regularly.

With all pets, if your pet is behaving oddly, or you are concerned, please contact a Veterinary surgeon.

Good luck in your new home from all at *Ash Veterinary Surgery*.

