

“Travel Sickness and that trip to the cottage”

For many dogs, travelling in the family car is a great treat, because they associate it, for example, with going to the park, the woods or meeting the kids from school. Some even enjoy their trip to the Vet Hospital! In fact most dogs tolerate the experience well, whether on a long or short journey. For others it can be a miserable and frightening experience, if they have not been properly prepared, or their needs during the trip are neglected.

In the first instance, if your dog has not been used to being in a car, take them for short trips, always before a meal rather than soon after (this helps avoid car-sickness). Make the association with the car ride rewarding for the dog by giving a treat or meal as soon as the trip is over.

Car or motion sickness is the result of the effect of irregular motion on the balance mechanism of the middle ear. The signs are restlessness, salivation and vomiting. Waiting at least six hours between the last meal and travelling will help. In severe cases of motion sickness, your veterinarian can prescribe medication to be given before a journey.

Here are a few suggestions that will hopefully make your pet's journey a pleasant one:

Have your dog travel inside the car rather than in the back of a pick-up or inside a camper. Always keep the pet away from the driver and never allow the dog to run and jump around. Always make sure there is plenty of fresh air and that the temperature is not too hot towards the back of the car where the dog will likely be. If you need to open a window, keep it closed enough that the dog cannot stick his head out of the window and be injured by flying insects or pieces of gravel from the road. Stop at regular intervals to give your dog a chance to exercise, relieve himself, and have a drink of water. When you stop, secure the dog with a leash BEFORE you open the door. Obey notices posted in pet exercise areas and always have a handy supply of plastic bags in the car for doggy poop.

Never leave your dog alone in a car. The temperature can quickly rise to a dangerous level for heat stroke, even on a cool day. Leaving a window partially open may not be enough and may invite trouble if a child pokes a finger into the car. Last but not least, please remember that heatstroke can kill.