

Guide to Pet Care:

How to arrange appropriate care for your pet whilst you're away.



Deciding between friends and family, a pet sitter, professional home from home care or a boarding kennel/cattery can be tough.

You will need to consider the following questions:

- Would your pet prefer activity and the company of other pets in a kennel situation?
- How will your pet's exercise and mental stimulation requirements be met?
- Would they be happier in the comfort of a home with their normal routine?
- Does your pet have special medical needs (such as arthritis or diabetes) that would help determine which type of care is best?
- Will family and friends be capable of looking after your pet's needs?





What are your options?

Family or Friends

This is often a first choice option. Always remember to make sure that the person in charge has up to date information e.g. vet contact details and any medication or special needs are fully explained. There can be issues if something goes wrong or friends and family feel obliged to help when it isn't really the best situation for either them or the pet.

Pet Sitting

This is when a sitter goes to your home and looks after your pets. This is very useful for those who do not want to leave their home unattended, or for those who have a lot of pets.

Home from home boarding care

There are organisations that arrange for your pet to stay with a loving host family in their own home. Detailed information is taken about your pet's lifestyle and then matched with a family able to offer similar care. This ensures they benefit from keeping their normal home-life routine and therefore experience very little disruption when you are away. It is an alternative to pet sitting as your pet has companionship all of the time on a one on one basis with no need for anyone to have access to your home.

Boarding Kennels

Kennels can sometimes offer your dog more attention, supervision and security than if they're left home alone to be visited by pet sitters once or twice daily, as well as having staff who are trained to spot any health problems. However, it's important to remember that some dogs get stressed in unfamiliar environments, so kennels that offer additional services such as grooming, training and bathing may benefit dogs that are more dependent on human contact.

Catteries

Catteries are usually 'outdoor' or 'indoor', depending on the presence of outside runs. Ideally there should be no possibility of cats coming into direct contact with each other (apart from those normally living together at home). Cats also love scratching posts, toys and shelves, and need adequate space to exercise and move around.



How to choose what's right for your pet?

Recommendations by a trusted source are a good starting point. If choosing professional care such as a home from home care or a pet sitter, check their references and invite them to an introductory meeting at your home to meet the pet, discuss care, and plan visits. If boarding your pet, request a tour of the facilities before booking - check for overall cleanliness, feeding and exercise timetables, and staff friendliness, knowledge and willingness to accommodate any individual pet requirements or deal with emergency situations.

Whatever you decide, ensure that your pet's vaccinations are up to date (with a certificate) well in advance of your departure. Vaccinating on the day you leave may satisfy the requirements of the kennel or cattery, but may not be the best disease protection for your pet. If your pet is boarding, bringing their own toys, blankets, treats, familiar unwashed bedding and food can also help to reassure them, reducing stress and the chances of an upset stomach. Finally, have a great trip, knowing that your pet is in good hands and will be happy to see you when you return!

Useful links:

Barking Mad Dog Care www.barkingmad.uk.com

National Pet Sitters www.dogsit.com

Boarding Kennels Directory www.boardingkennels.org/uk/

