



Your pet will love the vet!
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Home Away From Home

A common question at our veterinary clinic is "Doc, I'm going on vacation and I need to find someplace for Fluffy to stay. What do you recommend?" There are several options available whether you are looking to find temporary lodging for a feline or canine friend. Consider the following:

1. Friends or Family Members: These folks might be your best bet if they are pet savvy individuals and already know you and your pet. When I go on vacation, Macey Moo stays with either her "Grandma and Grandpa" or her "Aunt Michelle" or her "Other Family" (some friends of mine that she just adores). All of these individuals know her likes and dislikes, unusual phobias, potty schedule and the level of care she would receive if something were to happen when I am gone.

2. Pet-Sitters: A newer option. These are folks who will come to your house a pre-determined number of times per day for a set fee to care for your pet. Make certain they are bonded and insured and if you can obtain references, all the better. You can find pet sitters in the phone book, online or by asking your veterinarian, trainer or groomer. Meet the pet-sitter in person. If you are not comfortable with them, don't entrust your pet's care to them.

Another possible pet-sitting option involves asking your veterinarian if any of their staff members take on any pet-sitting in their own homes. Occasionally staff will perform this service for certain clients. Be aware that staff members of a clinic are typically doing this on their own time, not affiliated with their clinic, and are usually not insured as it is often an occasional "perk" they may offer.

3. Boarding Kennel: There are a variety of "kennel" type situations available. The lower-cost options typically involve cement runs where your pet will be housed next to other pets. Cleanliness, stress and noise levels and your pet having to urinate and defecate on cement instead of outside can all be serious concerns. Higher-Level options can involve "suites" with beds, webcams, playgroups and multiple trips outdoor for potty breaks and TLC. And, of course, there are many levels in between to choose from. A good boarding kennel will allow you to see all areas of the kennel on a tour. It should be clean, in good repair and not have a powerful odor. They will require basic vaccinations such as distemper, parvo, rabies and bordetella as well as an intestinal parasite check to keep both your pet and the other pets at the facility safe.

4. Have Pet Will Travel: Many hotels and campsites allow pets and some even have on-site kennels.

Before you choose this option, read some articles about traveling with your pet. He or she should be friendly, well-behaved, house-trained, and enjoy traveling. This can be an enjoyable, rewarding option, but you will need to plan at least a few activities that involve your pet and check to see whether the hotel or campground allows you to leave your pet unattended in the room/onsite (many don't, for good reason).

Whichever home away from home you decide to choose, make certain your pet has a sturdy collar with identification tags on and a microchip ID. Supply the caretaker you have chosen with your pet's food, treats, daily routine written down, your contact information when traveling and your veterinarian's information along with instruction on what should be done if you are unable to be contacted during an emergency. Find the caretaker that suits your needs and you are most comfortable with. This will allow you to completely relax and enjoy your vacation!