



# Holiday plans for your pet?

Written by Dr Tim Hopkins

As the Easter Holiday period approaches and many Australians prepare to hit the road or jet off on trips, the Small Animal Specialist Hospital (SASH) is reminding pet owners of the importance of preparing their pets with up-to-date vet care plans and arrangements while away from their much-loved companions.

Many pets are placed in the care of pet sitters and local kennels over this period and SASH Veterinarian Dr Tim Hopkins says it's important to provide your pet's carer with all the information they may need to take care of your pet if your pet becomes unwell, or in an emergency situation they are unable to contact you.

"We've seen it many times before, pet sitters are left with a very important responsibility but are often not equipped with key information such as vet details or owners' instructions for veterinary care.

"Likewise, with boarding kennels there is an onboarding process, but it is important for owners to think about other considerations like providing an up-to-date medical history and nominating a proxy for medical consent if there is an emergency and the owners are uncontactable."

"It's important that a pet sitter understands the health history of your pet and knows the signs to look out for if something is wrong and what to do if something does happen to your pet while in their care," said Dr Tim.

## Dr Tim's top tips for leaving your pet with a carer or boarding facility during the holidays:

- Make an 'about me' document with key information of your pet including date of birth, medical history, dietary requirements and any current medications that your pet is on, the contact details of your pet's usual vet, as well as a preferred 24/7 emergency vet
- If your pet is on medication, a special diet, or parasite prevention, make sure you have enough to last more than your holiday
- Have a discussion with the pet sitter or kennel about your wishes if you can't be reached in case of a veterinary emergency, especially related to medical and financial consent should they need make decisions around treatment in your absence.

## If you are travelling with your pet during the holiday season, there are some special considerations which are worth remembering. Dr. Tim says:

- Research where you are heading so that your pet is protected from the local hazards. If it is a tick area, make sure that your pet has a tick preventative prior to travelling. This year there is a national tick antiserum shortage, so prevention is vitally important.
- Similarly, if you're travelling from a relatively dry area to the coast, you'll need to ensure your pet is on a heartworm preventative.
- Check where you are staying for rat baits and other pesticides. Rat bait toxicities are very common during the holiday season as many travellers mistakenly assume rental homes and friends and relatives' houses are dog-safe.
- Find a reputable emergency vet in the area so you're prepared in a veterinary emergency.



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**“It’s important for people to know where their closest pet emergency facility in case their usual practice is closed over the holiday period,” Dr Tim recommends.**

“Places like SASH have emergency departments that are open every day, all the time for walk-ins or when your regular veterinary practice is closed. Not all pet emergency centres are the same, so it is important to do your research ahead of time and make sure your emergency vet is equipped to handle most emergencies.”

Dr Tim recommends checking to see if your after hours vet has the following services:

- Intensive Care Unit – This is where the most serious cases will go to for life support and other life-saving procedures.
- On-call surgeons – Misadventure and trauma can and often does occur during the holidays and may require emergency surgery. Excellent emergency hospitals will call in a specialist surgeon, day and night, to ensure the best outcome for your loved one.
- Ophthalmology – There are lots of urgent eye related emergencies, such as penetrating injuries and glaucoma.
- Premier Poisons Centre status – Premier Poisons Centres like SASH have the equipment and expertise to manage poisoning cases 24/7, including 24/7 Emergency and Critical Care without appointment, a complete range of antidotes, antivenoms and antisera and 24/7 access to Poisons Information Specialists. Our North Ryde hospital also offers Australia’s only dialysis unit for removing certain toxins and treating acute kidney damage.

With a projected busy travel season approaching, make sure you’ve prepared your pet as well as you’ve prepared your other family members.

To learn more about SASH, visit [www.sashvets.com](http://www.sashvets.com) or contact (02) 9889 0289.

