

## Safe Travel at Home & Abroad

**Follow these steps to safe travel with – and without – your bird.**

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If you are traveling with a bird within the United States, make an appointment with your avian veterinarian ahead of time to make sure that your bird is healthy and to procure a health certificate, which is required by for air travel and travel across state lines.

**Air Travel** Notify the airlines as soon as your travel plans are decided, as most airlines only allow one or two pets per cabin stowed under the seat in an approved carrier. These spaces fill up quickly. Some airlines do not allow any pets in the cabin at all, so that must be taken into consideration when booking flights. Avoid having your bird travel in the cargo hold of planes. Although the section for animals is pressurized, climate-controlled and contains breathable air, it is safer to keep your bird with you, under your seat, so you can keep control of its safety. Most birds will not eat or drink much while flying or traveling, so heap lots of food items in their carrier for the trip. A few pieces of cut-up orange or apple are often all they need for a trip, which will provide them with sugars, liquid and some fiber. Once you reach your destination, you can offer them their regular diet. Bring some bottled water for your bird to drink, as a change in local water may cause an upset. Bring its normal foods so it will have familiar food items to eat.

**Travel Smart** Practice the same precautions for biosecurity that you would normally follow at home. Don't take your birds into areas where other birds are housed, and if you do handle any other birds, be sure to thoroughly wash your hands before handling your bird. While birds cannot catch a "cold" or respiratory infection from a draft or from being chilled, the stress of travel and change of temperature and humidity may predispose a bird to acquiring an infection. Make sure your bird to have a clean bill of health prior to traveling, so that any subclinical illnesses can be identified and treated before the trip. Keep your birds indoors and away from any exposure to wild birds, bird droppings or any other bird-related items.

### Safe Travel Without Your Bird

When traveling to foreign countries (without your birds): Do not visit any open bird markets, farms or areas where wild birds congregate, so you do not expose yourself to any potential diseases. Disinfect your shoes with a bleach solution or pre-packaged benzalkonium chloride disinfection wipes, available from your veterinarian, before packing to return home. If you are souvenir hunting, avoid coming home with anything containing feathers. While the purchase or possession of feathers from certain birds in other countries may be legal, those items may be illegal to possess in this country and may, in fact, require CITES permits in order to bring them into this country legally! CITES doesn't just cover the animal, but also any parts of the animal, including feathers, bone, skin, fur, teeth, etc. For example, it is illegal to ship a blood specimen from a CITES-regulated animal into another CITES-participating country without appropriate CITES permits. Avoid bird toys from foreign countries, since you won't know with certainty that the materials, dyes and parts are all bird-safe. Ditto for purchasing bird cages from other countries unless you can be certain that the materials used in the manufacturing process are all bird-safe.