

ADVICE FOR NEW COMERS TO ABU DHABI

It is always a relief when your beloved pet arrives safely after air travel. However there are a few other considerations to take in to account on arriving in a country which may have a very different culture and climate to your previous home. Here are a few tips and suggestions which may help make the transition to life in the UAE easier both for you and for your pet.



Settling into a new home

Arriving in a new place can be very unsettling for some dogs and cats. ‘Feliway’ and ‘DAP’ plug-in diffusers can be very helpful in this situation. They diffuse feline or canine pheromones which help make the cat or dog feel more secure and less stressed. For more information you can drop in to the German Vet Clinic here in Khalifa City A, where you can buy them over the counter.

Climate

The climate in Abu Dhabi is very hot, especially in summer with temperatures rising over 40° C, and high humidity. We would advise you to walk your dog only in the early morning or evening during this time, to avoid the hottest part of the day. Take plenty of water with you on walks and never leave your dog alone in the car. If you need to leave the dog in the house please leave the air conditioning on – the temperature should be as comfortable as you would want for yourself. Gardens should have a good shaded area and a water hose in the garden is also useful for cooling a dog down after a walk.

Heat stroke can happen very quickly so please take all precautions. If your dog becomes too hot and gets distressed on a walk you need to cool it down as quickly as possible, using cold water or cold wet towels, and take him/her to a vet as soon as possible.

Many people have their dog’s coats clipped short especially during summer months. Long haired cats can also be trimmed to make them cooler (and less matted). We have a cat and dog groomer here at the GVC – contact us for more information.

Walking your dog

There are many lovely beaches around which are perfect for dog walking, as well as dog swimming! Make sure you know which beaches allow dogs on them and please clean up any dog mess to leave the beach clean for others. It is a good idea to hose off sandy feet when home to reduce any irritation from the sand between the toes. Don’t forget that sand also becomes very hot during the day and can burn a dog’s footpads – another reason for waiting until a cooler part

of the day to walk. There are also lots of parks but some may require dogs to be kept on leads so check in your local area.

Letting cats outside

We have a large population of street cats in Abu Dhabi which can sometimes cause problems with fighting over territories. There is generally no problem in letting cats out but if you are able to, 'cat-proofing' the garden or compound can help prevent straying or fighting, and keep them safer. We recommend microchipping and if the cat (or dog) already has one it can be registered on the local database. Any lost cat or dog that is found will be checked for a microchip and can be returned to the owner promptly if a microchip has up to date contact details on it.

Water

Although we use bottled water for ourselves here, the tap water is considered safe for cats and dogs to drink. Due to the hot temperatures, lots of clean water should always be available both inside and outside the house for drinking, and also taken on dog walks. Some cats don't naturally drink a lot - in these cases specially designed cat water fountains can help encourage more fluid intake. This is important to avoid dehydration. If your cat has ever suffered urinary or kidney problems it is especially important to keep them drinking. You can buy pet water fountains at our clinic.

Food

You can buy many brands of pet foods in the local shops. If you would prefer a veterinary recommended diet such as Royal Canin or Eukanuba we can supply that for you. We can also supply prescription diets so let us know if you require anything special.

Vaccines

A rabies vaccine will have been required to enter the UAE. These should be kept up to date as they will also be required to travel onwards. Some vaccines need renewing yearly, others every 2 or 3 years – it should tell you on the pet passport. Regular annual vaccines are also recommended for both cats and dogs. Some local kennels will require a kennel cough vaccine to be given before boarding. If you are travelling on to a different country please inform us as soon as possible so we can let you know if further injections / boosters / blood tests are necessary.

Parasite control

Intestinal worms can be a problem here as many animals are not treated. Worming is recommended every month until an animal is 6 months old, then every 3 months thereafter. This can be less frequent for indoor only cats.

Ticks are found here and there are a few (rare) tick-bourne diseases (ehrlichia, babesia) that can be caught from them. Frontline can be applied monthly to kill any ticks which are not seen and removed. If removing them yourself, be careful not to leave the head behind.

We stock both Stronghold and Frontline for flea control. Fleas are not as common here as in other countries, but you should still check your pet regularly to make sure they are clear.

Ear mites are very common here, especially in cats. You would notice very itchy ears with a dark brown waxy discharge. They can be treated with a Stronghold application to the back of the neck. Alternatively you can make an appointment for us to check there is no infection.

Another common problem here, especially in cats, is Ringworm. This is not a worm but a fungal infection (incidentally, also common in people in UAE). The signs of ringworm in a cat include hair loss and scaly or scabby skin. They are not always itchy. Signs in people are usually circular red rings on the skin. We can check for ringworm with a special lamp or by fungal culture and it can be treated by oral liquid and medicated shampoos.

If you have any health concerns with your pet or would just like a general check up please call the clinic to make an appointment on 02 556 2024

We hope you enjoy your stay in UAE!

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