

SHOULD YOU BOARD YOUR CAT?

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KENNELING YOUR CAT

When you must travel, making sure your beloved cat is well taken care of while you are gone is foremost on your mind. Whether you leave suddenly or plan a trip carefully, you're probably going to feel guilty over the upheaval your leaving will cause your pet. But is it better to find someone to watch her, or should you take her to a kennel? The short answer is a predictable one: It depends on the situation.

If you are planning a trip or vacation, you may want to find a reliable friend or relative to take care of your cat right at home. Staying at home reduces a kitten's chances of picking up a respiratory infection, which is very contagious and quite common in many kennels. (Adult cats are often immune.) It is also less stressful for your cat, who may be so upset she refuses to eat. Although your cat will miss you madly, at home she is in a familiar place surrounded by familiar scents.

But taking care of your cat means more than just feeding her, making sure the water is changed daily or cleaning out the litter box. The person who takes care of your precious one should spend some quality time with her, too. Ideally, this person genuinely likes your cat, with the affection returned for good measure. If you don't have someone who can take care of your cat, you might want to hire a professional pet sitter. But you need to plan well ahead of your trip. Finding one you and your cat like may take some time, and they tend to get booked around holidays. For tips on how to find a good pet sitter, and where to look, see the story [How To Find a Good Pet Sitter for Your Cat](#).

If you decide to kennel your pet, you should have done your homework in advance, especially if sudden business trips are the norm. Visit the kennel and ask as many questions as you feel necessary to ensure the health of your cat. Are dogs and cats kept within the same room or even within sight of each other? (All-cat kennels are the best for your cat.) Does the kennel offer places for your cat to climb and perch? Will she be in her own room?

If your instincts tell you the kennel won't take proper care of your cat, you're probably right. You should be completely comfortable that your cat will get the treatment she deserves.

Finding the right kennel is only half the job, however. You will need to show proof that your cat is healthy and has been vaccinated against all diseases, either yearly or every three years. A good kennel will require proof of vaccination against FVRCP (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia). For more information on how to find the right kennel, see the story [Kenneling Your Cat](#).

Saying good-bye is hard to do, but with preparation for proper care you can keep your cat healthy and happy for your eventual reunion.