



Q: Mems is nearly 15 years old, and except for needing daily meds, he's in good health. However, recently, whenever I'm away from the house for even for one night, he refuses to eat until he sees me again.

Soon I need to spend a week with family in a city 500 miles away, and want to take Mems with me. I'd never put him in baggage, but I understand some kind of carrier is required if he rides in my airline seat. What are the rules and costs? *Marge K, Harrisburg PA*

A: Except for service dogs, only small cats and dogs are permitted to ride in the aircraft's passenger cabin. Unless Mems weighs more than 20 pounds, he's OK, but must stay in an approved container. Make sure you take enough of his meds to last the week you'll be traveling, plus another week's worth in case of delays. If you believe Mems also needs a sedative if he's a nervous traveler, ask your vet to prescribe one.

Also, check with your vet about carry-on pet containers. More comfortable are soft-sided plastic

or canvas, rather than rigid suitcase material. They should be large enough for your cat to stand up and move around inside. Also with adequate screens on at least two sides for fresh air and to allow your cat to see out. Better to book a red-eye flight, when there are lower lights and less noise aboard.

Mems must stay in the container throughout the flight, though owners often take the small pets out once or twice to stretch their legs. If the flight is longer than an hour, have some dry cat food. Because individual water containers may not be allowed aboard, ask the flight attendant for some in a plastic cup.

Taking Mems as your flight companion isn't cheap. Some recent one-way prices: American, United and US Air \$100, Delta and Midwest \$75 and Northwest \$80. When booking your schedule, check with the airline about requirements for pet carry-ons, prices and other info. And to both you and Mems, have a safe, happy flight!