

SUMMER PET CARE TIPS

Summer is the time for fun, outdoor activities, swimming, picnics and vacations. And, understandably, people love to share many of their summer activities with their animal companions. Unfortunately, every summer many beloved pets die unnecessarily during extremely hot weather.

HEAT exhaustion is one of the most common ailments of pets during the summer months, so pet owners should be cautious. If it's an exceptionally hot day, keep your dog or cat in the house with you and a fan and/or air conditioning. If it's too hot outside for you, it's too hot outside for your pet. Signs of heatstroke may include: hot skin, rapid panting, twitching muscles, salivation, a dazed expression. Wrap your pet in a towel with cool, not COLD water. Cool him down by giving him ice cubes to lick (as cold water will upset his stomach worse and hasten dehydration). Let him lie in front of a fan. To prevent heat exhaustion, make sure your outside pets have access to shade, fresh water and that you monitor them at least several times a day to make sure they're all right.!

NEVER leave your pet in a parked car – not even if you crack the windows or park in the shade. The temperature in the car can increase rapidly and cause heat exhaustion, heat stroke or even death. On an 85 degree day, the temperature inside your car, even with the windows open a bit, will climb to 102 degrees in 10 minutes. After 30 minutes, it will go up to 120 degrees or even higher!

GIVE your animal companion plenty of cool, clean water at all times. Dogs can only sweat through the pads of their feet and by panting. Evaporation from the wet surfaces of their mouth and nose helps lower their body temperature.

DO not leave your pet shut in an empty house or tied outside while you're on vacation.

NEVER force your dog to run in hot, humid weather. Watch for hot pavement. Sensitive paws burn easily. After a walk or run, check your dog's paws to make sure they are okay.

KEEP vaccinations up-to-date. This is a time when most pets come into contact with other animals at parks, beaches, lakes and campgrounds.

DON'T let your pets roam the streets. Veterinarians see numerous fight injuries and bite wounds in the summer as well as animals hit or run over by cars.

USE Heartworm preventative as mosquitoes which increase dramatically in the summer, carry heartworm - one of the most deadly ailments household pets suffer. Mosquitoes carry a parasite that causes pulmonary vascular disease that can lead to heart failure. Preventative medication is the best way to avoid this deadly disease.

WASPS, bees and hornets are also a problem during the summer. Although there is no real way for your pets to avoid being stung, they can be treated with antihistamines to reduce the swelling that follows an attack. If swelling doesn't subside, see your vet!

WATCH the exercise and diet of your pets. Overeating can result in overheating. Eating less is healthier for them. Do not encourage exercise during the hottest part of the day. Early mornings and evenings are the best times for exercising.

FLEAS, ticks and other parasites may infest your pet. There are many good products available to keep fleas and ticks off your pet. Check with your vet!

WHEN planning a vacation, don't forget your animal companions. Plan for them too. If you are planning on taking them with you, make certain that they will travel comfortably (with plenty of potty and exercise stops) and that they are welcome guests at hotels, homes of friends, etc, and your destination. If you are leaving them behind, make certain you have a well-credentialed pet-sitter or boarding facility. Referrals from trusted veterinarians and animal-loving friends are always helpful. Check them out well in advance of your proposed trip and make reservations, leaving them with a list of medications and instructions as to feeding, exercise, etc. Leave the name of your vet along with friends and neighbors who know your pet. Leave your whereabouts and how to reach you.

ON holidays such as the 4th of July when your pet is exposed to loud noises such as fireworks, make sure he has a safe, quiet place/sanctuary inside your home, that he is in a room from which he cannot escape or run away and that you have either the television or radio on for him to distract or deflect the scary outside sounds. Keep your pet away from crowds of people and loud noises. This will keep him calm and safe!

BY following these tips, there is a high probability that you and your animal companions will enjoy a safe, healthy and happy summer!!!