

## Summer

### Summer-time Fun!

Summer is a great time to enjoy the outdoors with your pets. But it's also a time when risk and injury and heat-related health problems may occur during fun activities.

### Watch for signs of heatstroke

Rapid panting, hot skin, twitching muscles, a dazed look. If you notice any of these signs, wrap your pet in a towel soaked with cool water (not iced). In severe cases place them in a bathtub. Heatstroke can be fatal. Be sure to have your pet checked by the vet once you get through the initial emergency actions.

Never leave your pet in a parked car.

Cracking the windows or parking in the shade does not stop the inside of a vehicle from heating up, even on a cloudy day. A car temperature can rise about 150 degrees in minutes. Leaving pets in cars is the #1 cause of heatstroke.

Keep vaccinations up to date.

Summer is the time when most pets come in contact with other animals at parks, campgrounds, and dog parks. When traveling keep a copy of their vaccinations on hand, along with any other emergency medical information on your pet.

Take care of external and internal parasites before there is a health problem. Keep your pet on a flea and tick preventative program if advised by your vet; and be sure your dog has been heartworm tested and is on a preventative.

One type of external problem can be pollen, grass and weeds – especially during late spring and early summer — foxtails are the #1 hazard for our pets. They can get into their fur and work their way through the skin and body causing severe and expensive medical problems. If you're in a brush area while hiking, be sure to brush your pet before you get ready to come home. Check ears, under arms and legs, belly and of course the tail-end. Then check again after you get home.

Watch for hot pavement and beaches — paws are very sensitive and can burn easily. You won't know that your pet has sore paws until he stops playing. Dogs don't pay attention to how their feet might feel hot if they are going after a frisbee or ball at the beach. So you need to watch out for them.

Sunburn can affect short-haired pets and those with pink skin and white hair. Watch how much time they are in the sun.

Have plenty of fresh water available for your dogs at home and on the road. Bring bottled water from home if you are traveling out of the area. Sometimes water in other areas may cause diarrhea.

Streets and yards are not always safe places. Don't let your pet roam. Keep your pet's ID on its collar up-to-date and secure. Be cautious of pesticides and herbicides used on lawns. Some pets can be highly allergic to these chemicals. If you think an area has used a lot of chemicals on the grounds, be sure to wash your pet's feet and underbelly when you get home.

Not all dogs swim well. When introducing a pet to water the first time, ease them into it and never throw the pet in. Don't let pets drink from pools, streams or the ocean. If they swim in the ocean, be sure to rinse them off as the salt and minerals can damage the dog's coat and can cause skin irritations.

#### Exercise and Diet

During the hottest part of the day, keep your pets in a cool environment, or in a shady spot outside. Don't let them run too hard or eat grass. Also be sure to keep exercise at least an hour apart from any meals (this should be done all year). Keep your pets on their regular diets — adding ice cubes to their water bowl keeps the water cool, plus some dogs like to play with ice cubes. If you have room, get a kiddie pool for your dog to cool off in. They'll love it.

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