

Tips to Keep Your Pets Safe This Summer

The best way to protect your pet in hot weather is to keep him indoors, in a cool room and out of the sun. Make sure he has plenty of water available and limit activity levels during peak hours of sunshine.

It's especially important to resist the urge to take your dog or cat along for a car ride. On a hot day, the temperature inside a parked car can rise to dangerous levels quite quickly. Even parking in the shade or lowering windows does little to reduce the air inside a car, which can easily surpass 40°C in mere minutes. With only hot air to breathe, a dog's normal cooling process of panting doesn't work, and his internal temperature can rise, leading to severe heat exhaustion, brain damage or even death.

To keep pets safe during hot spells:

- Monitor the activity of your animals and be careful they don't over exert themselves.
- If you suspect heat stress, bring your pet to a cool area, gradually lower your pet's temperature by sponging cool water onto him/her and call your veterinarian immediately.
- When you take your dog out for exercise, make sure to bring enough water for the both of you.
- Exercise your pets — more slowly and for shorter periods of time — in the early morning and/or evening to avoid the midday heat.
- If your pet spends lots of time outdoors, make sure there is adequate shelter for protection from the sun and heat. Outside kennels need to be well ventilated and situated in shaded areas. Clean, fresh water must be accessible at all times.
- Sun-baked asphalt can burn paws — keep to the grass, but make sure to watch out for pesticide warnings!
- Ask your veterinarian about sunscreen for your pets — certain parts of your dog (for example, nose and ears) can get sunburned!
- Be sure to keep your pets up-to-date on their vaccinations and preventative medications. Fleas and ticks stay busy in warm weather and summer is also the prime time for heartworms. Check with your veterinarian about the best way to keep your pets healthy.
- Beware of cocoa mulch and other gardening products. Cocoa mulch can be deadly if ingested and has an appetizing scent to some animals. Pesticides, fertilizers and other harsh chemicals can also be quickly fatal if ingested.
- The summer months are the peak season for dog bites because so many kids and dogs are playing outside. You can reduce the risk of your dog biting through training, socialization, and getting your dog spayed or neutered. Kids can learn to stay safe through good manners around pets and responsible pet ownership education.