

# Hot Weather Tips to Keep Pets Healthy and Cool



1. Do not leave your pet alone in your car—vehicles heat quickly in the sun, and animals left in them can succumb to heat stroke in a very short time. Heatstroke is life threatening for both dogs and cats. Signs to watch for are: heavy, loud breathing, a staggering gait, and a bright red tongue or gum tissue. If heat stroke is suspected, get the animal to a cool place, put cold compresses on his belly, or wet him down. This is a medical emergency—take him to your veterinarian as quickly as possible.
2. To prevent him or her from overheating, don't let your dog exercise in hot weather. If you want to run with your dog, do it in the cool hours of the early morning or late evening.
3. Dogs and cats need a cool, shady place to sleep during hot weather, as well as plenty of clean, fresh water, accessible at all times. Feed your dog or cat in the cooler hours of the day. Older animals have a hard time in hot weather, so be extra sensitive to their needs during the hottest hours of the day.
4. Be sure that your pet's vaccinations are up to date. Parvo virus, an illness that flourishes in hot weather, can be fatal to dogs that have not received their vaccinations. Also, be sure your pet's rabies vaccinations are current. During the summer months, pets often spend more time outdoors, and the chances of encounters with wildlife (possible rabies carriers) increase.
5. It's heartworm medication time. If your dog hasn't been tested for heartworm this year, see your veterinarian. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes, but it can be prevented by administering a monthly preventive between June and November.
6. Keep your pet well groomed. Daily brushing or combing lets you check for fleas and ticks. Fleas can cause allergic reactions and "hot spots" in dogs. Hot spots are large, wet lesions that appear suddenly in areas where the dog has scratched. See your veterinarian for flea and tick preventives or if a "hot spot" appears.
7. Leashes save dogs' lives! Keep your dog on a leash when you are walking him so he can't run into traffic or chase cats and squirrels or other wildlife.
8. Play with your pet instead of stroking him to fend off July 4<sup>th</sup> firework fears. Playing a game with your pet when he shows early signs of anxiety, like pacing or trembling, can distract him from the stressor and, in the long term, teach him to associate that same stressor with positive things such as play and treats. Petting him is likely to make no difference—and, in fact, it may reinforce that attention-seeking that comes with nervousness.
9. Keep dogs away from picnic garbage. Ingesting corncobs and chicken and other bones can be life-threatening. Also, according to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, the peels, fruit, and seeds of citrus plants such as lemons, oranges, limes, and grapefruits contain varying amounts of citric acid, limonin, and volatile oils that can cause gastrointestinal irritation and result in vomiting and diarrhea. The stems, leaves, and seeds of apples,

cherries, peaches, and apricots contain cyanogenic glycosides that can cause vomiting and loss of appetite when eaten in large amounts. In severe cases, weakness, difficulty breathing, hyperventilation, shock, and even death can occur.

10. If you have a swimming pool, do not leave your dog unattended in the pool area. Not all dogs can swim—they can drown if they fall into the water.
11. Use a heavy screen on windows or keep them closed if you have cats. During the summer, the number of cats suffering from "high rise" syndrome, or falling from windows, increases dramatically. Contrary to myth, cats do not land on their feet when falling from heights. The most severe injuries occur when cats fall from second- or third-floor windows.

Follow these safety guidelines to have a wonderful summer with your pets!

## TRAVELING WITH YOUR PET

Summer is vacation time but before including your pet - make sure to do the proper planning and preparation that is necessary when traveling with family pets. Consider whether your pet is comfortable when traveling. Some animals, like some people, function better in familiar surroundings. A car-sick animal can make a trip miserable for everyone. Some dogs and cats cannot withstand the rigors of travel due to illness, injury, or temperament. If this is the case, discuss options such as using a reliable pet-sitter or a clean, well-managed boarding facility with your veterinarian.

If you will be staying with friends along the way, be considerate. Find out in advance if the pet is welcome. The same goes for hotels, motels, parks, and campgrounds. Always check whether pets are allowed or kennel facilities are available. If the pet must be left alone in a hotel room, place a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door and inform the maid and the front desk. Consider bringing along a portable kennel for use in hotel rooms or the homes of friends or relatives who are not comfortable having your pet loose when no one is home.

A few general tips apply whether you travel by car or plane. Be sure your pet is properly identified with a current tag and/or a microchip. Grooming (bathing, combing, trimming nails) before a trip, plus having its favorite food, toy(s), and dishes available will make your pet more comfortable. Have proof of rabies vaccination and a current health certificate with you when crossing state or international borders. Keep a photo of your pet with you to help with identification in case your pet is lost.

Before undertaking any trip, consult your veterinarian to be sure that all required vaccinations are up-to-date and to receive a health certificate within ten days of travel.

Resource: American Veterinary Medical Association. For more information, visit the AVMA website, [http://www.avma.org/communications/brochures/traveling/traveling\\_brochure.asp](http://www.avma.org/communications/brochures/traveling/traveling_brochure.asp), for a printable copy of the brochure, "What You Should Know About Traveling with Your Pet."

Resource: University of Pennsylvania, School of Veterinary Medicine