

Hot Weather Tips to Keep Pets Healthy

- Overheating (heat prostration) can kill an animal. Never leave an animal alone in a vehicle, since even with the windows open, a parked car, truck or van can quickly become a furnace. Parking in shade offers little protection, as the sun shifts during the day. When traveling, carry a gallon thermos filled with fresh, cold water. To prevent him 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. **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 in severe cases completely wet him down so that his hair is soaked. This is a medical emergency – take him to your veterinarian as quickly as possible.
- 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.
- Be sure that your pet's **vaccinations** are up to date. Parvovirus, 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.
- 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.
- 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 skin sores that appear suddenly in areas where the dog has scratched. See your veterinarian for flea and tick preventives or if a "hot spot" appears.
- Keep dogs away from **picnic garbage**. Ingesting corncobs and chicken and other bones can be life-threatening by obstructing or perforating the stomach. 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.
- 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.