

Tips to Keep Dogs and Cats Safe in Summertime

Taking extra care of your pets during the hot summer months is crucial to keeping them healthy. For dogs with thin or short fur, pet sun block is a great solution to prevent sunburn. In the summertime, insects are actually more of a threat for dogs and cats than they are for children. Be sure to give your pets plenty of water, as everyone, kids, adults and pets, all need plenty of water to combat the intense heat of summer.

Animals with thin coats are at high risk of sunburn at all times, but even dogs with thick fur can suffer from sunburn. It's easy to see that bristling coat of fur shining in the sun and think it means that our pet's skin is safe. All pets are susceptible to burning on the tips of their ears and their noses. Another trouble spot is the abdomen. Many dogs and cats like to lie on their backs letting their stomachs take in the warmth of the sun (yes, dogs and cats sunbathe too.). Lying on their backs, while comfortable, puts pets at significant risk of sunburn. Lotions designed just for dogs and cats can be found online or at stores. If you have trouble finding what you need ask your veterinarian. Be especially careful in applying these lotions as pets have a much harder time washing out their eyes if the lotion gets in them.

During the summer months, bugs can be a major problem for animals. Allergic reactions to bees and fire ants can be fatal to your dog or cat if the vet is not visited immediately. The first step is to use flea and tick medication. It is also important to use heart worm meds because a mosquito can carry the parasite to your dog or cat. Once this is taken care of keep a close eye out for anomalies. If you notice scabs on the animal you should check closely that the medication is working.

Fleas and ticks can lead to constant scratching, to the extent that patches on your animal's body could be rubbed raw. This is tame when compared with what bees and fire ants can do to your dog or cat. Getting frisky with those buzzing bees can lead to bad stings on the nose and head of your pet. That is a serious matter itself; however, if your pet is allergic it can be fatal.

Another potentially fatal situation for your dog or cat in the summertime involves fire ants. A sleeping dog or cat can be easy prey for these red pests. These ants will actually scatter themselves over your pet's stomach and synchronize their patterns of stinging. This can cause immense pain. If this occurs, hose down your pet and bring it to the veterinarian as soon as possible. Prevention measures should solve most problems, but be sure to keep your eyes open just in case.

Swimming is something that most dogs will readily do. Cats, while they tend to avoid the water, could fall in by accident at any moment. The threat with water is not that the pets will not know how to swim, as most will know what to do instinctively. The main issue is how the animal will get out of the water after it has entered. Pool-sides and the edges of boats can be very difficult for a pet to climb onto while also staying afloat. If your dog or cat panics upon entering the water it may find it impossible to get out.

To prevent this from happening, give your animal some basic lessons. Have your dog or cat go into the water and help lead it to the stairs or ramp to get out of the water. This training will make it easier for your dog or cat if it falls in by accident at any point.

Dehydration is a constant issue for animals as well. The extra heat will force your pet to consume substantially larger amounts of water in the summertime. There is a great temptation to give your dog or cat ice cold water. It is a good idea to avoid this and stick to room temperature liquids. If the water is too cold the animal is likely to end up vomiting bile and becoming even more dehydrated. This becomes especially likely if your pet drinks fast, which happens very often during the hot summer months. The occasional ice-cube or frozen treat can be helpful to help your dehydrated pet cool down.

During the summer, staying cool is the greatest challenge of all. Never leave your pet in a parked car with the windows closed. In less than ten minutes that car can get up around 120 degrees. Temperatures that high could kill your animal. If you must leave a pet unattended in your vehicle park it in the shade, put the windows down and be sure to have water that your pet can drink. Pets with flat faces and/or thick fur are at the highest risk for heat stroke. Try to take your pet out in the cool of the morning or early evening to keep it from overheating. The daytime hours can be too much for your animal.

It is also a good idea to keep track of how the sun shines in your yard. A place that is shaded at one time may be bright in another because of how the sun moves across the sky. Be sure that your dog or cat is resting in the shade as much as possible while outside. At the least make sure that shade is available at all times so that your pet can find relief from the sun. They will know when they are too hot, at least most of the time, be sure to give them ample opportunities to find relief. Excessive panting is one of the earliest signs of heat exhaustion, but if symptoms get to the point of vomiting be sure to get your animal cooled down. One sure fire way to do this is to pour cool water on the dog or cat and work the liquid into its coat. If this does not help, and the animal ends up losing consciousness you should take it to a veterinarian immediately.

Summer is one of the best times to have fun with your pet. Playing a game of fetch that involves your dog jumping into a body of water can be very fun. Watching your cat chase after butterflies can be entertaining as well. However, if you want to enjoy these pastimes you need to be sure to take care of your animal in the summer heat. When the proper precautions are taken your pets have a great chance of keeping cool and staying safe. Take some time to get yourself and your pet ready for the summer sun, and enjoy a safe and happy summer together.

About the Author

Brian Jenkins is a freelance writer who often writes about topics pertaining to the care of pets and health options for pets such as [Pet Meds](#)

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