

FOCUS

O N P E T H E A L T H

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER ARE UPON US!

BY BOYD HARRELL, DVM

The seasonal bright sun and warm days mean backyard barbecues, trips to the park and family vacations. Summer is a time for both you and your pet to enjoy the sunshine and outdoors. But along with the fun, the season presents situations that can endanger your pet. By taking precautions, you can avoid potential disaster.

Top 5 Don'ts That Will Keep Your Pet Safer This Summer

1. Don't let them get stressed.

Rapidly changing summer schedules, more people bustling about, unfamiliar faces, additional travel, fireworks and thunderstorms can all cause our pets a great deal of anxiety. Try to keep a routine as much as possible and provide a safe, quiet place for your pet to escape if they feel the need. And consider a safe and natural supplement to calm your pet.

2. Don't let their temperature boil over.

Our pets' fur-blanketed bodies can quickly overheat. Summer temperatures can dehydrate pets, making breathing difficult — especially for short-nosed, heavy coated or older pets. Make sure your pet always has adequate shade and plenty of fresh water. Overexposure to the sun can lead to sunburn on the nose and ear tips so apply pet-safe SPF 15-40 sunscreen to those areas. And absolutely never leave your pet in the car — even a short time. The inside temperature can rise 30 to 50 degrees in just minutes.

3. Don't be afraid to let them take a dip.

Home swimming pools of any size provide a refreshing way for pets to cool off — but don't let them drink pool water because the chemicals can cause digestive upset. After the swim, rinse your pet's coat with fresh water to avoid skin irritation. And be sure to secure your pet away from the pool when you are not there. Many pets drown every year because they jump or fall into the pool and can't get back out by themselves.

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4. Don't give them access to dangerous toxins.

Deadly plants, paint, barbecue lighter fluid and leaking coolant are all silent hazards to our pets. And beware! Insecticides can lurk anyplace . . . in the garden, stored in our garage, the backyard shed, etc. Most lawn chemicals are safe after they have been watered in and given a chance to dry completely. Just be sure you keep your pet away from freshly treated lawns and anyplace where toxins are present.

5. Don't risk peril during playtime.

Pets sustain more injuries in the summer due to increased activities and distractions. Keep your pet on leash or in a securely enclosed exercise area. If you ride with a car window down be sure the opening is not large enough for your pet to jump out. And never let your dog ride in the back of a truck without a secure tether short enough to prevent jumping overboard.

Be aware of these summer pet hazards and take preventative action. It will allow both you and your pet to have an enjoyable and safe summer. So what are you waiting for? Go out and have some summer fun

Boyd Harrell, DVM

Dr. Harrell is a former multi-veterinary practice owner, an international speaker and a pet health advisor for Oxyfresh. He is formally trained in life, leadership, health and business coaching and holds advanced certifications in "The Model of Human Behavior," which is the model of how people interact and what does and does not motivate them.

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