

Summer safety tips for pets | All That Pet Care

The heat and humidity of summer can be just as uncomfortable for pets as it is for humans. In fact, summer can be downright dangerous for pets. Following simple precautions at home, on the road, and while on vacation can make summer enjoyable and fun for everyone.

Here are some tips:

1. **Walk dogs during the cooler early morning or evening hours.** Bring a water bottle, take occasional breaks, or shorten walks when days or nights are never really cool.
2. **Remember that sidewalks, roads, and sand can be extremely hot for a dog's paws and can even cause burns.** Walk your dog on grass or dirt as much as possible.
3. **Never leave a pet in the car.** In only a few minutes, temperatures can reach as high as 120 degrees, and pets may succumb to heat stroke or even die.
4. **While driving, use a special pet safety harness or a crate for your pet.** This will prevent the animal from being thrown during sudden stops or accidents. At a minimum, keep a dog in the back seat and install a barrier between the front and the back as well as a seat extender to prevent falls onto the floor. Never allow a pet to ride in the back of a truck, and keep windows only partially open.
5. **Dogs left outside should have plenty of shade and a dependable source of cool water.** Be sure a water bowl or bucket is placed in the shade and can't tip over.
6. **Remember that dogs and cats are susceptible to sunburn and skin cancer, especially light-colored or sparsely-coated animals.** The nose and tips of the ears are especially prone, and a non-toxic, veterinarian-recommended sunscreen should be used when sun exposure is unavoidable.
7. **Always supervise pets around pools, lakes, and beaches.** Just like humans, they should never swim alone. Be especially careful around rivers and lakes where broken glass can be hidden among stones, and be alert to strong currents or riptides in the ocean. If swimming isn't safe for humans (especially children) then it's not safe for dogs.
8. **Dogs can become victim to snakebite just as humans can.** Find out if snakes—poisonous or otherwise—are common around favorite hiking trails or camping destinations. Even non-poisonous snakes can bite and cause allergic reactions, and dogs should be kept on a short leash where snake encounters are possible.
9. **Keep toxic substances such as lawn fertilizer, pesticides, and antifreeze locked away from pets.** Thoroughly clean any spills (remember that antifreeze actually tastes sweet to animals though it's deadly).
10. **Keep pets indoors while mowing the lawn and especially while weed-wacking or blowing.** Small stones or debris can become deadly missiles.
11. **Dogs should always wear a collar with identification (name, phone number, and home address) even while at home.**
12. **While dogs and even cats may enjoy summertime parties in the backyard or on the patio, pets are safer if kept indoors away from the excitement.** Hazards include hot grills, hot food, firecrackers and sparklers, and well-meaning friends or children who may offer inappropriate food or beverage to your pet. Common toxic food hazards include chicken bones, fatty foods, alcoholic beverages, onions, garlic, chocolate, raisins and grapes, avocados, and tobacco or marijuana.
13. **If a dog is afraid of thunder or loud fireworks, a crate may offer solace.** A quiet corner in a basement can also reduce anxiety in a frightened dog. Remaining calm and quiet and speaking softly—setting an example for your pet—also may help.
14. **Just like humans, dogs can become irritable in the heat.** Take precautions with children who may want to play with a dog while on a walk or in the yard. Even the most loving, gentle dog can and will snap or bite in certain circumstances.

Have tips or stories of your own to share? Comments are welcome below.

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[Hot weather tips](#) from the ASPCA

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