



7 summer safety tips for pets

April showers are gone, and the sun's rays are on. Now's the time to enjoy some cat cuddles and romps with your dogs. But make sure your pets stay healthy and safe during this season marked by pests and high temperatures. Here are seven ways to safeguard your pets:

- 1 Cover the basics.** Secure an up-to-date tag on your pet's collar, and make sure to use a leash when you head outdoors. Consult your veterinarian for flea and tick control options, and always keep your pet's vaccinations current.
- 2 Be wary around water.** Not all dogs are natural swimmers, so watch your pooch when you're near the pool, beach, or lake. On trips to the ocean, make sure your pets don't drink the salt water—it upsets their stomach, just like yours. And watch those currents; the best paddling dog can struggle against a mean undertow.
- 3 Keep cool.** Schedule walks in the early morning or evening; dog paws hate hot pavement. You can also make dog exercise sessions safe by stopping for drinks of fresh water and finding shady spots for necessary panting breaks. Some pet owners also help prevent overheating with short fur shaves for cats and dogs in the summer.
- 4 Watch for warning signs.** Heat stroke is an issue for pets, too. Be on the lookout for early symptoms: excessive panting and drooling, bright red gums, weakness, and balance problems. As the condition worsens, pets may experience labored breathing, lethargy, and even seizures. If you see any of the above signs, get your pet to its veterinarian immediately.
- 5 Safely see the sights.** Taking your pets for a ride in the car or minivan? Never leave them inside—windows up or down—on hot days. Keep dogs' heads in the car while driving; inner ear damage, lung infections, and injury happen when man's best friend sticks his head out the window. Buckle up your dog with a harness or seat belt for dogs, or a crate or carrier secured with a seat belt. And never let dogs ride in the back of trucks. A crate in the truck bed keeps dogs from bouncing out in an accident or being hit with debris on the road.
- 6 Party with prudence.** Be wary of what your cats and dogs can get into when you celebrate. Chocolate, raisins, and onions can be bad for dogs and cats, and alcohol is also a no-no. If your pets get anxious or fearful around fireworks or big crowds, keep them away from the sparklers and concerts.
- 7 Protect against pests and poisons.** Fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, and more seem to be everywhere in the summer, so consult with your veterinarian on the best pest preventives to use for your and your pets' lifestyle. Also, keep your animals off areas sprayed with chemicals or insecticides, and always store fertilizers and other poisonous substances out of their reach.

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