

Sunshine safety

Keep your dogs healthy during sun-and-fun season with dog natural health care

Summer sunshine waves, and you happily expect favorite outdoor activities with your canine companion: weekend camping trips, lively games of flying disc, mountain climbing, and long walks on the beach.

Although summer weather and more daylight hours afford prime opportunities for outdoor play, the season is also the busiest time for veterinary hospitals, in part because of altered health hazards underlying in hotter weather, travel; and outdoor activities.

Every summer, many dogs are hospitalized, and some lose their survives, due to heat stroke (hyperthermia), which you can easily prevent but which veterinarians find hard to handle. Usage dogs safely at dawn or dusk when it's cooler, quite than at midday. And never leave your dog in a parked car - even for a short time. Parking in the shade and leaving windows cracked will not defend your dog.

Because dogs dissipate heat from their bodies inefficiently (compared to humans sweating) by panting, they can't always tolerate conditions that you can.

Short-nosed breeds (Pugs and Boston Terriers), stockier-bodied breeds (such as Bulldogs and Rottweilers), heavy-coated breeds (Alaskan Malamutes and Chow Chows), and dogs with weight, heart, or lung troubles are especially sensitive to heat stroke.

Symptoms of heat stroke include fast attack of vomiting or diarrhea, trouble breathing, brick-red gums, a rectal temperature over 104 degrees, depression, grogginess, seizures, collapse, and coma.

If you intend your dog might have heat stroke, rapidly get her out of the sun and into a shady, cool place. Mist skin with cool water from a hose or spray bottle, or place wet towels around her neck, chest, and limbs. Or place your dog in front of a fan for an evaporative effect. Never plunge an overheated dog in cold water; this really gains core body temperature. Do not allow your dog to drink large volumes of cold water. This will trigger vomiting. If your dog doesn't vomit, often offer only small amounts of water or ice chips. Seek veterinary care immediately even if your dog improves. Hyperthermia can damage vital organs, including the brain and kidneys, and requires immediate, aggressive medical therapy.

Summer holds other dangers as well. Succeed these tips to help keep your dog safe and healthy this summer:

Get your dog a veterinary checkup if it's been longer than three months for a healthy puppy or six months for a adult , geriatric dog, or one with an ongoing health problem.

Provide building shade or natural shade for your dog in your yard or kennel, and arrange a pointed digging zone. Pick a shady spot of bare dirt, wet the soil with a hose or sprinkler, and then promote your dog to dig there by burying a toy or treat. She will lower her temperature by lying on the cooler soil under the surface of your yard.

Invest in a child's paddling pool. Many dogs love to lie in shallow water to cool off. Plus, your dog will have a supplemental supply of water.

Ensure your dog has insured access to fresh, cool drinking water at all times. Change water often for freshness and to avoid leaving a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Keep sunburn of light-colored skin on white haired or thin-coated body parts. Keep your dog out of the sun, or apply waterproof sunblock to the bridge of her nose and ear edges.

Keep off walking your dog in the middle of the day. Hot pavement, sidewalks, sand, and stones burn and blister footpads.

Look at a shorter summer haircut (not a shave) for heavy-coated breeds.

Prevent access to toxins on newly fertilized fields or decorated areas covered with chemicals and herbicides, as well as via poison baits. Consider using only organic fertilizers and pest management, and store all chemicals out of your dog's

reach.

Check your car often for radiator fluid leaks; tiny quantities of sweet-tasting liquid can kill a dog.

Before you head out on vacation:

Purchase a pet identification tag that sets aside you to update information as needed during your trip. (Or make a homemade tag by use tape and a waterproof marker to change your telephone number as you travel.)

Let your veterinarian know where you will travel, then update vaccinations as reserve. Consider a bordetella vaccine if you will board your dog.

Continue with your dog's heartworm testing and prevention program, as well as her preventive flea and tick treatment.

Replenish medications for seasonal allergies or other ongoing health problems. Find copies of canine health records to take with you.

Purchase or gather a pet first-aid kit with gauze pads and bandages, gloves, first-aid tape, tweezers, scissors, antiseptic cream, hydrogen peroxide, instant ice pack, small flashlight, your veterinarian's telephone number, and the number of a 24-hour veterinary clinic.

- Check requirements for health certificates and vaccines for out-of-state or international travel. Pack a beach umbrella, fresh drinking water, and bowl for trips to the beach.

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- Happy chases to you and your dog during the bright summer days ahead!

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