

# WARM WEATHER SAFETY TIPS FOR PETS

## Sun and Heat Exposure



**Walks and Outdoor Playtime:** The sun's rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., so when possible, therefore you should plan walks and outings earlier or later to avoid the peak sun/heat times.



**Sunburn:** Dogs can get sunburn, which can lead to discomfort, skin damage and even skin cancer. Vets advise applying sun block to sun-sensitive areas such as nose and ears, particularly during the high-sun times of the day and for pets with short fur and fair skin. To be effective, sun block should be at least SPF 15, plus should be applied more than 15 minutes before sun exposure. **Note: some experts recommend that zinc oxide not be used on pets. If your pet gets sunburn, contact us for advice**



Bring ample water and a water bowl on long walks and car rides. You can keep a spray bottle of water handy for spritzing the dog's head and paws, however do not spritz a dog's face if he is skittish or afraid of being sprayed. Avoid overexertion in hot weather. Seek out shaded places to exercise and avoid exercise when it is really hot. If your dog shows fatigue, take him home or to a cool, shaded area without delay.



Avoid hot asphalt and other surfaces that can burn your dog's footpads. Dogs perspire through their feet, so long periods on hot pavement reduce their ability to cool themselves.



Do not leave dogs out in the sun for long periods, even in a safe yard. Whenever the dog is outside, make sure he has access to fresh, cool water in a non-tippable bowl and shade.



The heat tends to affect elderly, overweight and larger dogs more quickly. Longhaired dogs can overheat quicker than their short-haired counterparts. While short fur can be a benefit, avoid shaving your dog down to the skin. Fur protects dogs from sunburn and actually helps insulate them against high heat. It also makes it harder for bugs to bite their skin.



Brachiocephalic breeds such as pugs, bulldogs, Boston terriers and those with heart, lung or other conditions, should be kept indoors, preferably with air-conditioning, as much as possible.



Be careful about using molded plastic pet carriers in hot weather. The heat inside may build up to dangerous levels.



If you see dog or cat suffering in the heat, left outside without adequate fresh water, shade or shelter, or being treated cruelly, please speak to the owner for the welfare of the

pet. If the owner will not act responsibly or humanely, call Evansville Care and Control at (812) 436-4498, Hearing impaired call (812) 436-4925 or if closed call 911.



**Heat Stroke Prevention and Treatment:** To protect your pet from heat stroke, review the tips above. Heat stroke can be brought on by activity as well as confinement outside in the heat, and the effects can be devastating. First, be aware of the signs of heat stroke:

- Excessive panting
- Labored breathing that may signal upper airway obstruction
- Bright red mucous membranes in the gums or eyes and/or bright red tongue
- Lethargy and weakness
- High body temperature
- Collapsing and seizures, even coma



If you notice any of these signs, get your pet inside and place a cool, wet towel over him/her or submerge in cool water. **Do not use ice, which can damage skin.**



Dogs cool themselves by panting; this draws air over the moist membranes of the nose and tongue and cools by evaporation, but panting works only for short periods of time. Prolonged panting endangers the metabolic system. In addition, high humidity interferes with the ability of panting to cool the body.

## Travel



Bring ample water and a water bowl.

- **Never** leave animals (or children) in cars in warm or hot weather even with the windows partially open. Temperatures outside in the 80's and 90's may not seem that bad but inside a vehicle temperatures can exceed 135 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. When the pets' body temperature exceeds 106 degrees, permanent damage and death can occur. Consider a pet in a hot car an emergency and if the owner cannot be found, immediately call Evansville Care and Control (812) 436-4988 or 911. If life's depend on it.
- When taking your pet along to visit friends and relatives, take things from your home that will comfort your pet. Crates are ideal for containing and comforting your pet as well as making your host feel more secure. The crate gives your companion animal a nice, quiet place to rest and calm down. Bring along favorite chewies, toys, pet bedding and non-tippable water container.
- **PET FIRST AID KIT:** Keep first aid kits accessible in both your home and in your car. The kit should include an animal first aid book, hydrogen peroxide 3% USP, rubbing alcohol, adhesive tape, cotton balls, sterile gauze pads, petroleum jelly, Bag Balm for paw pads, turkey baster or bulb syringe for administering medications, saline eye solution to flush out eye contaminants, artificial tear gel to lubricate eyes after flushing, greasecutting dishwashing liquid such as Dawn for bathing (to help safely remove oils and other matter), rubber gloves, tweezers and/or forceps to remove stingers and ticks, a muzzle (in case the animal is excited or in pain), material such as gauze that you can use to muzzle a dog or to stabilize an injured joint or limb, rectal thermometer, towels, scissors, sterile needle to remove splinters and tick heads, activated charcoal tablets (when away from a clean water supply), a can of soft pet food, phone numbers for your vet and the closest emergency vet hospital. Pack a sock or dog booties in case a paw is injured, and a

disposable razor in case you need to shave fur from around a wound. It helps to have a pet crate or carrier, which is also a safe way to transport a pet in any situation.

## In the House:



At home, maintain a moderate temperature in your house and leave cool water for your pets.



**Water and Lead Risks:** Young animals tend to absorb such toxic substances more quickly in their developing bodies, therefore if there are reports of lead or other toxic substances in your household water, the safest route is to give pets bottled or filtered water.



Another good practice is to never use water from the hot water tap for drinking. Also, run the cold water a few seconds before filling the water bowl.

## Skin and Fur Care

Brush your pet vigorously and regularly. After being inside in dry air during the colder months, a dog's fur and skin can become dry. In addition, many dogs grow an undercoat that you'll need to comb out in warmer weather. If the fur gets matted, the skin cannot breathe. Then the dog will scratch and pull out fur, which can result in sores. As cats lose their coats with the change of seasons they often get heavily matted fur and hairballs which can cause vomiting or obstructions. Daily brushing helps prevent this.

Warm weather present our pets with a whole new set of problems. Fleas and ticks cause skin irritation, hair loss, severe discomfort and blood loss. Fleas can transmit tapeworms and plague. Ticks can transmit lymes disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Erlichiosis and many other diseases.

Heartworm is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes and can infect dogs, cats, and ferrets. Both outdoor and indoor pets commonly get these easily preventable diseases.

Intestinal parasites (roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, tapeworm, coccidian, and giardia) incidence increases in warm weather months due to increased outside activity and exposure.

Use a good year round prevention against these parasites. We recommend Trifexis, Interceptor, and Vectra 3D for dogs and Revolution for cats and ferrets. Consult your veterinarian before using such treatments on sick, debilitated, very young or pregnant pets. DO NOT use dog products on cats and vice versa.

## Fertilizing and Pest Control



Pet paws are often irritated by lawn and garden chemicals, and pets can get very ill from inhaling or ingesting chemicals. Chemicals are often ingested when the pet licks his paws and fur after a walk outside. Poison hotlines receive countless calls about pets getting sick after exposure to chemically treated lawns.

Metaldehyde, one of the poisonous ingredients in many baits, is often very appealing to dogs. Metaldehyde poisoning can cause increased heart rate, breathing complications and seizures, leading to liver complications and death. So keep dogs off treated lawns and wipe paws after each walk.

If you use any potentially toxic substances such as lawn chemicals, post signs so that other pet owners are aware. Fence off treated lawns. Do not use lawn chemicals,

pesticides, etc. on breezy or windy days.

- Keep pets away from treated areas until the treatments have dried completely. Watering the lawn after application of fertilizers and other lawn care products is necessary with many products. Watering before allowing pets or children on any treated lawn is typically a good idea because it can help break down the chemicals. Store lawn and other potentially poisonous products in areas inaccessible to your pets.
- Cocoa bean mulch is hazardous to pets. Its smell and taste is very appealing to them, yet it can be deadly because it contains theobromine. Avoid using it on lawns that pets can access.
- Keep pets away from mouse, ant and roach bait and traps indoors and outside. Note: there are humane alternatives to traditional mouse traps.

## Plants



A number of plants can be poisonous and deadly to pets. For example, lily of the valley, oleander, rhododendron, azalea, yew and foxglove can affect the heart. Some lilies and rhubarb leaves can lead to kidney failure. At the end of this tip sheet are lists of online guides to potentially poisonous plants.



Some mushroom species and cycads (such as Sago palms) can cause liver failure. Heavy rains have led to mushroom growth and an increase in poisonings in dogs this season, so rid mushrooms from your yard and watch out for them on walks.



Beware of fungus growth. There is risk of blast mycosis, which can lead to pneumonia-like symptoms and potentially fatal organ damage in dogs. Blast mycosis thrives as mold spores in soil.

## Suggestions for Non-Toxic Yard and Garden Care



Slug control: metaldehyde products are poisonous, and poison many pets each year. Choose an alternative, such as products containing iron phosphate. Apply the products only to the base of plants that attract slugs. Another alternative: caffeinated coffee kills slugs and weaker coffee can repel slugs.



Canola oil is a green, nontoxic way to control insects. Canola oil seems to repel insects by altering leaf surface as well as irritating the insects.



Corn gluten-based pre-emergent crabgrass and weed killer can be safely used around pets and children, however, they can kill grass seedling, so you wouldn't want to use them soon after you've seeded a lawn.



Here is a nontoxic, inexpensive weed-killer: To stop growth of weeds and grass between bricks, paving stones and stepping stones, pour or spray full-strength white vinegar directly on the weeds and grass. Also, vinegar can be scrubbed bricks as a cleaner. If you need a stronger vinegar to kill poison ivy and similar plants, use

concentrated vinegar available at Asian grocery markets.



More safe methods to reduce insects in your yard. (1) From Hints from Heloise: make a solution of 1/2-cup of liquid dishwashing soap, 2 tablespoons of ammonia, and 5 to 7 cups of water. Use a bottle spray attachment with spray the solution to eliminate the insects. (2) If you plan to use a commercial product in your yard, first read the label to make sure it's safe for use around pets.



Another natural repellent and a way to help keep pets away from potentially toxic plants: mix lemon juice and water in a spray bottle and spray the plants from time to time.



To deter pets and other animals from entering your flower and plant beds, place wind chimes there. The sound helps repel them.



By the way, to keep dogs out of your garden beds and other parts of your yard, create a separate place for dogs to play. Delineate with a decorative or plain fence of wood, iron or other material of your choice. For the surface, use wood chips, bark chips, leaves, ground rubber tires or other type of mulch.



Keep pool chemicals stored where pets can't get to them.



Avoid potentially pet toxic citronella and pest containing insect repellents.



Charcoal lighter fluid can be toxic.



Clean jewelry

## Other Yard Safety Alerts



Keep pool chemicals stored where pets cannot reach them.



Avoid potentially pet-toxic citronella and deet containing insect repellents.



Know that charcoal lighter fluid can be toxic to pets.



Glow in the dark jewelry can be toxic to your pet.



To avoid exposure to outdoor hazards, keep pets indoors when unsupervised, secure window and door screens, and hold tight to dog leashes outdoors.



Block access to air conditioning unit and puddles from fluids coming from air conditioners.



Keep grass mowed, weeds pulled and bushes trimmed to help eliminate hiding places used by ticks and other pests.



A good, fairly safe way to keep mosquitoes away is to spray your yard weekly with Simple Green, available at home and garden stores.



Beware of lawn ornaments, which can be a choking hazard for pets.



If flies are a problem, pyrethrin-based sprays and ointments are less toxic repellants.



Use hoses with caution. When being filled with water, some hoses can suddenly unwind and hit a nearby person or pet. Also, there have been reports of toxic substances transferred by hoses. To be on the safe side, fill water bowls using your indoor water supply instead of a garden hose.



Do not leave dogs unattended in yards with metal training or choke collars or tied out on a chair or other teather. The rings or the teather can easily get caught on something and cause choking. Small dogs can be attacked and have no way to escape. Did you know it is against the law in Evansville to teather an unsupervised pet in an unfenced yard?



It is not a good idea to leave dogs unattended in yards at all, as it puts them at risk of becoming a barking nuisance to your neighbors ... getting in a fight with a wandering animal ... growling through the fence at passersby ... and being a target of pranks, teasing, rock-throwing, poisoning and pet theft.



When outdoors, provide your dog with plenty of shade and access to clean, fresh water in a container that he cannot tip over.



Dogs sometimes drink water collected in pans under potted plants (indoor and outdoor) so remember to dump the water or block access.

## Walking Your Dog



Bring ample water and a water bowl. Choices include collapsible bowls, bottles with conveniently attached trays, and more.



Avoid hot asphalt and other surfaces that can burn your dog's footpads. Walk during the cooler times of the day.





Watch for puddles, and do not let pets drink from them. Antifreeze, coolants and parasites are threats year-round. Animals are attracted to the taste, but ingesting even a small amount can cause severe illness and death. Products using propylene glycol are safer than those containing ethylene glycol.





Do not walk dogs near grass and flower beds that may have been chemically treated with fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides. Pet paws are irritated by chemicals, and pets can get critically ill from inhaling or ingesting chemicals. Chemicals are often ingested


are when the pet licks his paws and fur after a walk outside.

 The wind can carry poisonous metaldehyde dust from snail and slug bait onto lawns and park areas where your dog may walk. The dogs walk through the bait, then lick their feet and ingest the poison. It's wise to wipe paws after each walk.


 Check paw pads and between the toes for burrs, thistles, ticks and other injurious things during and after hikes. A good ointment to use is Bag Balm. Also check the dog's nostrils, in and behind the ears, in the armpits, and around the tail and head. Carry a flea comb to help check furry areas. If you find a tick, remove using tweezers and grasp close to the pet's skin ... try to avoid leaving the tick's head embedded in the skin.


 Some people use mothballs and other substances on lawns that are toxic to pets.


 Letting a dog romp off-leash in an unfenced area can lead to injury, accidents, lost pets, dog bites and other sad but avoidable situations. Even among those people who spend a lot of time training their dogs, few have airtight recall that works even in the midst of outdoor distractions. Please keep dogs on-leash when not in a fully and safely fenced yard.


 Antifreeze alert: many hotel fountains and public fountains contain antifreeze.


## **Playing It Safe During Outdoor Activities**


 Make sure your dog is wearing a well-fitted collar and current I.D. with a phone number for reaching you, including a cell phone if you have one. If you are traveling, get a tag displaying your temporary lodging and cell phone number.


 When taking pets to the beach, avoid subjecting them to toxins from dead fish or pollutants.

 If your pet goes swimming, rinse him/her afterwards with fresh water to remove chlorine or salt, and dry the ears completely to prevent ear infections. Keep dogs away from blue-green algae, which is extremely toxic.

 Before taking your dog on hikes, gradually introduce him/her to hiking, working up to longer walks. Be conscious of the temperature of the pavement that paws will be touching.

 When hiking on trails or walking through parks, keep watch for piles of feces, whether from other dogs or wildlife. Animal feces carry germs and parasites.

 Keep pets away from fishing gear. Dogs are attracted to the flies, lures and hooks in tackle boxes and may get injured or swallow one. Cats may get caught up in or swallow the fishing line, especially if it smells like fish. Keep fishing supplies out of reach of pets. To clean off pine sap or tar, try Dawn dishwashing liquid, or petroleum jelly to soften and follow with washing with baby shampoo.

 To give your pet a waterless bath, sprinkle on baking soda and brush off the excess.

Festivals and other outdoor events are usually not so fun for dogs. That's one reason why dog bite incidents rise in warm weather months. Heat also can affect human and canine tempers. So it is usually best to avoid taking your dog to crowded places.

East Side Animal Hospital would like to thank Wignall Animal Hospital for sharing some of the information in this article with us.

## Cool Treat for Canines



Treat your best friend to a Frosty Paw.

1 8oz cup of yogurt (plain or flavored, but avoid sugary varieties)

1 banana

1 or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter

2 cups of cold water

Mix all ingredients in blender, pour the mixture into 2 ice cube trays, and then freeze.

Feed your dog 5 or 6 cubes in his or her bowl.

East Side Animal Hospital would like to thank Wignall Animal Hospital for sharing some of the information for this article with us.