

Canine Summer Safety Tips



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Health Tips

We may know our canine companions better than anyone, but it is important to remember most of us are not veterinary professionals. If you are uncertain how to treat your dogs medical needs or if you have any questions, about your dog's health, contact your veterinarian. Keep the following information in mind with the arrival of summer:

- Have your dog's vaccinations updated, if necessary. Diseases such as rabies, distemper and parvo are ever-present dangers.
- Beware of insect bites. If your dog is bitten or stung, remove the stinger, and watch the site for an allergic reaction. If a reaction occurs or if there have been multiple wasp, bee or mosquito bites, take the animal to the veterinarian.
- Talk with your veterinarian about flea and tick prevention medications.
- Heartworm is a common problem for dogs. Take your dog to a veterinarian for a heartworm check every spring and follow your veterinarian's advice for heartworm precautions.
- Lawn and garden products may be hazardous. Make sure that plants and fertilizers within the dog's reach are not toxic.
- Dogs may need extra brushing and bathing to stay clean and healthy when spending more time outside.
- No matter how careful and responsible you may be, accidents can happen. Make sure your vet's phone number is close at hand and available to all family members.

General Summer Safety Concerns

Hot weather can make anyone feel uncomfortable, and your dog is no exception. Here's some safety advice for responsible dog owners:

- Never leave your dog unattended in direct sunlight or in a closed vehicle. Heatstroke can occur and lead to brain damage or death. Signs of heatstroke are panting, drooling, rapid pulse and fever. Immediately immerse the dog in cool water, and seek emergency veterinary assistance. Never leave your dog unattended in a hot, parked car. When it's only 80 degrees outside, the inside of a car can heat up to more than 120 degrees in just minutes. Leaving the windows partially rolled down will not help. Your dog is susceptible to heat stroke and possible death in these conditions.
- Always make sure your dog has access to fresh water.

Be sure your dog is registered with the AKC. Registration supports invaluable canine health research. It promotes responsible dog ownership and programs that make communities better places for dogs, their owners and neighbors. When you register your purebred dog with the AKC, you permanently record your dog in history. And you give your dog—and yourself—the chance to participate in exciting events. **Contact AKC to find out more.**

- All dogs should have proper identification at all times. The AKC suggests a collar with an ID tag, along with a tattoo or a microchip.
- Keep your dog on a leash when outdoors to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Try to avoid strenuous exercise with your dog on extremely hot days, and refrain from physical activity when the sun's heat is most intense.

Beach Tips

Taking your dog to the beach can be a great way to spend a beautiful summer day.

- Provide plenty of fresh water and shade for your dog.

- Dogs can get sunburn, especially short-haired dogs and ones with pink skin and white hair. Limit your dog's exposure when the sun is unusually strong, and apply sunblock to his ears and nose 30 minutes before going outside.
- Check with a lifeguard for daily water conditions — dogs are easy targets for jellyfish and sea lice.
- If your dog is out of shape, don't encourage him to run on the sand. Running on a beach is strenuous exercise, and an out-of-shape dog can easily pull a tendon or ligament.

- Cool ocean water is tempting to your dog. Do not allow him to drink too much seawater. The salt in the water will make him sick.
- Salt and other minerals found in the ocean can damage your dog's coat. So, when you are ready to leave for the day, rinse him with fresh water.
- Not all beaches permit dogs. Check local ordinances before you begin your excursion.

Does Your Doggy Paddle?

The majority of dogs can swim, and they love it. But dogs entering the water for the first time should be tested. Here are some important tips for teaching your dog how to swim:

- Never throw your dog into the water.
- Start in shallow water, and call your dog's name. You can also try to coax him in with a treat or toy, but always keep your dog within reach.
- Another way to introduce your dog to the water is with a dog that already swims and is friendly with your dog. Let your dog follow his friend.
- If your dog begins to doggy-paddle with his front legs only, lift his hind legs and help him float. He should quickly catch on and will then keep his back end up.
- Swimming is a great form of exercise, but don't let your dog overdo it. He will be using new muscles and may tire quickly.
- Be careful of strong tides that are hazardous for even the best swimmers.
- Never leave your dog unattended! You should always be in a position to help him get out of the water.

