

Angelic Dogs



Through your dog's eyes....

A Safe Summer With Your Dog

Summer is a time where many of us tend to go out and about with our dogs enjoying the lovely weather with them.

However we need to remember to keep our dogs safe on these glorious sunny days. We can dress appropriately for the heat keeping ourselves cool but our dogs do not have this option. Our dogs do not sweat through their skin like we do, the only way they can release heat is through panting or sweating through their pads and nose. If their body temperature reaches 106 °F damage can occur to the organs in their body which may become irreversible.

One of the biggest issues in warm weather is travelling with our dogs. Cars even with the windows open can heat up to over 100 °f within minutes resulting in heat stroke and possible death. Even though we are fully aware of the dangers of having our dogs in cars during the warm weather and the many warnings from Vets and canine organizations, each year we still unfortunately see dogs dying in hot cars.

Other things to keep in mind during the summer months are those dogs who are kept outside in the garden, those that are in the house alone whilst you are out at work, those that love to swim, walking with your dog and parasites.

It is therefore very important we look after our dogs during the warmer weather.



Here are some tips to help keep your dog comfortable and safe whilst enjoying the summer weather.

- Always make sure your dog has access to fresh cool water at all times. Make sure the water is not warm or stagnant or left in the sun. Our dogs actually are not keen on drinking warm water increasing the risk of dehydration for them.
- There are products that provide fresh cool water for your dogs available e.g. Drinkwell pet fountain.
- Can your dog knock their bowl over leaving them with no water when you are not with them?
- If you need to encourage your dog to drink you can flavour the water or place ice cubes in the water bowl, some dogs love playing catch the ice cube in their water bowl.
- Dogs like to dig to cool down, provide them with a damp sand pit to dig and lie down in.
- For those dogs that like water you can provide them with a child's pool for them to cool down in, keeping the water at an appropriate depth for your dog.
- You can also use a sprinkler for your dog to run under to keep cool.
- It is not always a good idea to shave your dog, this can increase the chance of sunburn and the double or undercoats actually act as air conditioning for your dog.
- Walk your dog early in the morning or later on in the day when it is cooler.
- Shorten the length of your walk, split into two walks.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, some dogs don't know when to stop playing fetch etc. you need to be sensible for your dog.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, find shady areas to walk your dog.



- Apply sunscreen to your dogs ears and nose, short haired, white/light coloured dogs and pink skin are more susceptible to burning.
- Adapt your walk to your dog, older dogs tire quicker than younger ones, puppies will get hot quicker, those with allergies will have their breathing affected,
- Look after their paws which are very sensitive and the heat of concrete, sand etc. will burn, dry and crack their paws, which is very painful and increases the risk of infection. Try to walk on grass, use booties and apply paw balm to keep them moist and prevent cracking.
- Don't go out jogging with your dog in warm weather.
- Stay close to home and take your phone in case of emergencies.

- Avoid crowded events which may be stressful mentally and physically for your dog, increasing the risk of them getting too hot.
- If your dog is kept outside, make sure they have shade and that the shade is available all day. Also use a drip hose to provide fresh running water for them.
- If they are kept inside whilst you are at work does your house stay cool for them?
- Keep away from rubbish bins as they decay quicker in the warmer weather and may cause illness.
- Check your dog for ticks daily. These are easily picked up during the warmer weather especially in wooded areas and long grass and carry lymes disease and other tick borne diseases.
- Take care with those dogs who enjoy swimming, not all dogs are skilled swimmers and can become victims of the undertow. Also don't let them drink it, salt water can dehydrate them causing vomiting and diarrhoea and water from lakes and ponds have parasites and bacteria that may infect your dog.
- Don't let your dog hang their head out of the car window increasing their risk of injury, like debris in their eyes. Much safer to travel with your dog in a crate.



- To keep them cool when travelling in the car use a canine cooler bed or freeze bottles of water and place in their beds or crates. Available at www.soothsoft.co.uk



- No matter how tempting it may be to give your dog left-over's from barbeques please avoid doing so and ask your visitors to do the same. You may cause gastrointestinal upsets leading to vomiting and diarrhoea. It is not just the left-over's that pose a threat but the ash or charcoal can result in gastrointestinal problems too. Also make sure the fire lighters and lighter fluid is kept out of your dogs reach.
- Make sure products used during the summer that are poisonous to your dog like lawn fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides are kept out of their reach, also remember some garden plants are dangerous even fatal to them too.



- If you are taking your dog on holiday with you, check out the local Vets in the area so you are prepared if necessary and make sure your dog has up to date identification details on their collar including your mobile telephone number.
- When on holiday with your dog take cold wet towels out and about with you to keep them cool.

Heatstroke

Heat stroke is a serious disturbance in the blood circulation where our dogs cannot control their body temperature and may cause organs to fail, and is a condition where immediate Veterinary attention is required.

Our dogs are susceptible to heatstroke when travelling in the car and out and about with us. Some dogs are more prone to heatstroke; those that are overweight, short-nosed dogs e.g. pugs, bulldogs etc. and those with heavy coats, heart or respiratory problems. It is important to know how to prevent it, what the signs are and what to do if it does occur.

Prevention:

- Never leave your dog in the car, even with the windows open.
- Avoid vigorous exercise and opt for shady areas.
- Provide fresh water all times.
- Grooming your dog can help.

Signs:

Initially:

- Distressed/restless
- Heavy Panting
- Rapid breathing
- Excessive drooling
- Bright or dark red gums and tongue
- Staggering, trying to maintain balance

As body temperature increases:

- Tacky mucus membranes/thick saliva
- Pale or blue gums
- Lying down unwilling or unable to get up
- Appears disorientated
- Bloody diarrhoea or vomiting
- Difficult, noisy breathing
- Seizures
- Collapse, loss of consciousness
- Coma
- Death

What to do:

- Move them out of the heat into a cool airy area.
- Place cool wet towels on their body especially their foot pads and around their head.
- Don't use ice or very cold water as extreme cold can cause the blood vessels to constrict preventing the body core to cool and may actually increase the internal temperature.
- Once the body temperature reaches 102 °F stop cooling to avoid over cooling and causing hypothermia.
- Offer cool water to drink but don't force it into their mouth.
- Call and visit your Vet even if your dog appears better, internal damage may have occurred and further checks may be necessary.
- If your dog unfortunately reaches the latter stages you need to get them **immediately** to your Vets.

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