

Tips for Keeping Your Dog Safe in the Summer

While the sun is shining and the outdoors is calling, it is important to keep in mind that the warmer weather poses a risk to dogs. Due to the increased exposure to ticks and other insects, high temperatures and even sunburn, it is important to follow safety tips to keep your dog safe during the summer.

Know the Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration and Heatstroke

Dogs can lose fluid through panting, urinating and even sweat evaporating through their paws. If you see any of the following symptoms, your dog needs immediate rehydration and replacement of electrolytes:

- Panting
- Dry gums and nose
- Thick Saliva
- Lethargy
- Sunken eyes
- Loss of elasticity in the skin



Giving your dog a bowl of water may not be enough, they will likely need their electrolytes replaced as well. Check with your veterinarian regarding appropriate electrolyte enhanced water or electrolyte solutions.

Heatstroke can be serious and often fatal if a dog has prolonged exposure to excessive heat. The degree of damage is determined by how high of a temperature is reached and how long the dog is exposed to the heat.

Early Stages of Heatstroke:

- Heavy panting
- Rapid breathing
- Excessive drooling
- Bright red gums and tongue
- Difficulty maintaining balance

Advanced Stages of Heatstroke:

- White or blue gums
- Lethargy or unwillingness to move
- Uncontrolled urination or defecation
- Labored, noisy breathing
- Shock

If your dog begins to exhibit signs of heatstroke, you should immediately try to cool them down. Cooling methods include getting them into a shaded area, spraying them with cool or tepid water, and fanning them. Severely affected dogs will need fluids, medication, oxygen and medical support.

The best support for heatstroke is **prevention**. Tips to help your dog beat the heat include:

- On hot days, keep your dogs inside where there is air-conditioning. Doghouses are not good shelter in the summer because they can trap heat inside the doghouse.
- Fill a child-size wading pool or a pool designed for dogs with fresh water for your dog to cool off in.
- Never leave your dog in a closed vehicle, as temperatures inside a car can reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit in just 20 minutes.
- Provide plenty of cool, fresh water.
- Avoid exercising your dog on extremely hot days. Take walks in the early mornings or evenings, when the sun's heat is less intense.
- Avoid exposing your dog to hot asphalt or sand as it can burn your dogs paws.

Other Summer Tips:

- Dogs with short hair, white fur, and pink skin can easily get a sunburn. Limit your dog's exposure to the sun and consider applying pet-safe sunscreen to their ears, nose, and coat at least 15 minutes before going outside.
- Ensure your dog's vaccinations are up-to-date since dogs tend to stay outdoors longer and come in contact with other animals during the summer months.

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/summer-safety-tips-for-dogs/>

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