

Summer Pet Hazards

It's Summer Time! Bring on the swimming pools, barbecues, and family vacations. Don't let a trip to the ER Vet spoil your time in the sand and sun. Longwood Veterinary Center wants you to consider the following pet tips for a safe and happy summer!

1. Heat and Humidity

Dogs and cats do not sweat in the same way humans do, rather they use their lungs to dissipate excess heat. As the temperature and humidity rise, their ability to cool themselves in this manner can fail, with heat stroke as a severe and possibly fatal consequence. Common signs of heat stroke include rapid heart rate, heavy and noisy breathing, dazed appearance, glazed eyes, drooling or vomiting, and collapse. If your pet shows any of these signs bathe him with cool, not cold, water and seek immediate veterinary care.

Ever heard the expression, "It's so hot, you can fry an egg on the sidewalk"? Black pavement (or asphalt) can become very hot and potentially harm your pet's paws. Shady paths and walks scheduled for cooler times of the day are much safer and more enjoyable for you and your pet.

As a final note, please... never leave your pet in a car on a warm day. Even outside temperatures as low as 70 degrees Fahrenheit can cause the inside of your car to reach 113 degrees within 60 minutes. The inside of a car can reach from 130-172 degrees within an hour if the ambient temperature is between 80 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Ticks

Ticks carry a number of diseases, including Lyme disease. We recommend you check your pet for ticks at least once daily and after every walk through wooded areas. Remember to use your flea/tick preventative of choice every 30 days, year round!

What should you do if you find a tick? Don't panic! Here is advice for easy and safe removal from the ASPCA's guide: [How to Remove a Tick from Your Pet](#). Most tick borne diseases cause common signs of illness that are easy to recognize such as fever, acute lameness, joint pain, anorexia, and lethargy. Please consult your Longwood veterinarian if your pet experiences any of these signs.

3. Salt Water

While it's probably not at the top of your toxin list, salt water is dangerous! Excessive consumption of salt water can result in a fatal increase in blood sodium levels, or salt poisoning. Help avoid this possibility by carrying a fresh bottle of tap water and offering it to your dog frequently while he's frolicking on the beach.

4. Slug and Snail Bait

The active ingredient in slug and snail bait is typically metaldehyde, which is toxic to all species (particularly dogs). When ingested, metaldehyde results in clinical signs that resulted in the nickname “shake and bake.” Within 1 to 2 hours of ingestion, clinical signs of salivation, restlessness, vomiting, and incoordination are seen. This will progress to tremors, seizures, and secondary severe hyperthermia. Generally, the prognosis is favorable if treatment is quickly and aggressively implemented.

5. Ice Cubes

While not a toxin, allowing your pet to chew ice cubes can lead to broken teeth. Try crushed ice instead or add a frozen water bottle to their bowl if you want to keep the water extra cold!

6. Flea and Tick Product Application on Cats

Take time to read the product label before applying topical over the counter flea and tick products to pets, especially cats. There are a number of “spot on” products on the market labeled “for use in dogs only”. Inappropriate use of these products in cats can result in illness and death.

7. Bee or Wasp Stings

Buzz. Buzz. It may be a cautionary sound to us, but your pets may want to investigate. While curiosity may not kill the cat (or dog), it might get them stung. What should you do? Call your vet who can suggest an office visit if irritation or swelling is severe, or prescribe an over-the-counter antihistamine. Some OTCs are harmful to pets though, so never dispense them on your own.

8. Fourth of July Celebrations and Family Barbecues

We all enjoy gathering with friends to cook out and enjoy a cold beverage. However, keep in mind, there are a few summer picnic staples that could cause problems with your pet.

- Barbecue Sauce:** This slow-cooked delight can cause diarrhea in dogs.
- Corn on the Cob.** Dogs cannot digest corn cobs. They pose a choking hazard and often cause small intestinal obstruction, requiring surgical intervention to relieve.
- Fruits with pits.** Peaches, avocados and other pitted fruits are choking and obstruction hazards.
- Food with bones:** Cooked bones may splinter and damage the GI track sometimes even piercing the intestine or esophagus.
- Foods with toothpicks or skewers:** Sharp and small, toothpicks can cause severe damage by piercing the intestines or esophagus.
- Ice cream:** A small amount of vanilla ice cream is fine for most dogs, however, it may not agree with all of them, especially if your pet has a sensitive stomach.

Last but not least, do not forget fireworks! Did you know summer is the number one time of year for lost pets? Fireworks can be particularly frightening to pets. This fear can result in pets breaking

free from enclosures, running far from home in panic. If you know your pet is bothered by the sounds and sights of fireworks, keep them in a safe and secure place. Discuss options for sedation or anxiety management with your veterinarian. Update your pet's microchip registration to keep your contact information current. Never allow dogs to chase fireworks as this can result in thermal or chemical burns to the paws, mouth, or face.

Go ahead, bask in the sun! Enjoy the season with your pet and we hope these tips help you keep your pet safe and happy!

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