



## Summer safety tips

Summer can be a difficult time for your dog, with heat stroke, sunburn and dehydration all a possibility. This tip sheet covers the problems that can affect dogs and how to protect your pet against these summer related dangers.

### Preventing Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when your dog's body temperature reaches dangerous levels. A dogs' normal body temperature is 38°C. Dogs can't sweat like we do – they have a few sweat glands, but only in their paws, so the main way they cool down is by panting.

Excessive panting, signs of discomfort and unwillingness to move around indicate overheating. Signs of heatstroke include drooling, reddened gums, vomiting, diarrhoea, mental dullness or loss of consciousness, uncoordinated movement, and collapse. Older or overweight dogs and flat-nosed breeds are particularly prone to heat exhaustion. Help your dog to avoid heat stroke by encouraging them into the shade when outdoors and going on shorter walks in the cooler parts of the day.

**When it's a pleasant 22 °C outside, the temperature in a car can reach 47 °C within an hour. Never leave your pet in a car on a hot day, even in the shade and with the windows open.**

Heatstroke is an emergency. Your dog could suffer brain damage or even die within 15 minutes. Ring your vet immediately. Cool your dog down with towels soaked in lukewarm water and open the car windows to create a breeze on your way to your vet.

### Preventing Sunburn

Dogs can be just as susceptible to sunburn as humans, especially those with white or light-coloured coats and those with thin coats. Protect your dog with sunscreen that is suitable for pets and pay particular attention to their ears, nose, back and the skin around the mouth. Look for a fragrance-free sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection. Speak to your vet if you're not sure whether a particular sun cream is suitable to use on your dog.

### Avoiding Dehydration

Your dog will need to drink more in warm weather to prevent dehydration so you'll need to provide them with constant access to cool water that you replace regularly before it gets chance to start getting warm. Wet food will also increase your dog's fluid intake, as will ice cubes. Bear in mind that your dog is more likely to become dehydrated if they are exerting themselves in the heat. Encourage them into the shade as much as possible, as well as encouraging them to take more fluids on board.

Warning signs of dehydration can include heavy panting, drooling, a fast heart rate and fatigue. These symptoms can also be accompanied by a high temperature and vomiting. Seek vet advice immediately as your dog may need intravenous fluids.

### Protecting Your Dog's Foot Pads

Paths and roads can get uncomfortably hot in summer – to the point that they can burn your dog's delicate foot pads. Avoid taking your dog on walks when its sunny and hot; wait until it is cooler and more comfortable instead.

### Swimming Tips

If your dog wants to cool off in the water, be vigilant. Not all dogs can swim as well as you might think and can quickly get into difficulties. Avoid water that is higher than chest height or buy your dog a doggy life jacket for use in water.

**If you have any concerns about your dog's health during the hot weather call your vet for advice immediately.**