

Keep Your Dog Safe This Summer

Follow these dog safety tips for a fun and safe summer.

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With summer comes long sunny days, lazy days at the pool and delicious outdoor barbeques. But along with the days of frolicking and fun comes extremely high temperatures, which can be dangerous for your dog. Veterinarians at the University of Pennsylvania's Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital have some advice for keeping your dog comfortable in the summer months. Heatstroke is a major danger in the hot days of summer. One way dogs can develop heatstroke very quickly is when they are left alone in a car – even if the window is cracked. Symptoms of heatstroke include: heavy, loud breathing, staggering gait and a bright red tongue or gums. If you think your dog may have heatstroke, apply cold compresses to his belly or wet him down, and take him to the veterinarian immediately – heatstroke is life-threatening. The coolest hours of the day are in the early morning and late evening. These are the times you should exercise and feed your dog. Although a swimming pool may seem like a good way to cool down your dog, make sure you don't leave him unsupervised. Not all dogs are natural swimmers and could drown if they fall in. Make sure your dog's vaccinations and medications are up to date. Dogs spend more time outdoors in summer, and increased exposure to nature comes with an increased risk of parasites like fleas and ticks, as well as encounters with rabies carriers. Check for ticks and fleas by grooming your pet daily. Many animals have a fear of thunderstorms and fireworks, due to the loud noises produced. Allay your dog's fears by actively distracting him with play, instead of with just a stroke or caress. In the long term, he may come to associate that stress factor with positive things like playing and treats. Turning on the TV or the stereo can help muffle some of the noise.